DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 429 007 SO 029 670

AUTHOR	Bourne, R.; Gundara, J.; Dev, A.; Ratsoma, N.; Rukanda, M.; Smith A.; Birthistle, U.
TITLE	School-Based Understanding of Human Rights in Four Countries: A Commonwealth Study. Education Research. Serial No. 22.
INSTITUTION	Department for International Development, London (England).
ISBN	ISBN-1-86192-095-4
PUB DATE	1997-10-00
NOTE	72p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Department for International Development, Education Division, 94 Victoria Street, London SW1E 5JL, England (free, subject to availability).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Civil Liberties; Classroom Techniques; *Foreign Countries; Interviews; School Surveys; Secondary Education; *Student Attitudes; Student Surveys
IDENTIFIERS	Botswana; *British Commonwealth; India; Northern Ireland; *School Based Understanding; United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child; Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Zimbabwe

ABSTRACT

This project is the result of a three year study of a sample of secondary schools in Botswana, India, Northern Ireland, and Zimbabwe. The study is backed up by longer interviews with students, teachers, and administrators, an audit of the curriculum, a review of educational materials, and an examination of the teacher education available. A questionnaire was administered to 915 students aged 14 and 16 in 23 schools. The study was designated as a key Commonwealth contribution to the United Nations Decade of Human Rights Education. It looked at how the education systems are currently providing an infrastructure for human rights in these member states. The project concentrated on: (1) how national commitments to human rights instruments are reflected in the school curriculum; (2) whether young people are acquiring basic concepts in selected dimensions of human rights; (3) what the difference two years of study makes to the understanding of young people; (4) whether there are any significant variations between countries (by gender or between different types of school within the same country); (5) what are the key priorities identified for strengthening this area of the curriculum; and (6) what scope there is for Commonwealth cooperation in the future. (Contains 45 references.) (BT)

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EDUCATION RESEARCH

SCHOOL-BASED UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN FOUR COUNTRIES:- A COMMONWEALTH STUDY

Serial No. 22

SO 029 670

R Bourne, J Gundara, A Dev, N Ratsoma, M Rukanda, A Smith, U Birthistle

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October 1997

Serial No. 22
ISBN: 1 86192 095 4

Department For International Development

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The results of a three year Commonwealth project based on secondary school surveys in Botswana, India, Northern Ireland in Britain and Zimbabwe, backed up by longer interviews and curricular and materials audits show that: in only one of the systems surveyed (in India) was there a reasonably exact reflection of human rights concepts in school curricula; that students generally can distinguish between what should happen in the administration of justice and unlawful action by police or public; that they expect fair employment practices even though in Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe the majority think that a person most like an appointing group will get a job; that they are generally anxious about violence; that many are ignorant of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In general older secondary school students have more sophisticated attitudes, but it is not clear that this is a result of their school experience, since radio and TV are rated highly for the quantity and helpfulness of their human rights material. In general the Indian responses showed the strongest and the Botswana responses the weakest grasp of basic concepts. Gender differences, and in Northern Ireland religious and communal differences, were significant in some responses. The project as a whole concluded that Commonwealth countries need to locate precisely where in national curricula their human rights commitments are reflected; that there is a special opportunity to strengthen human rights education in schools as part of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998; and that Commonwealth cooperation should be enhanced.

Copies of the national studies may be obtained from: **Botswana** -- Mrs Naledi Ratsoma, Curriculum Development and Evaluation Department, Ministry of Education, P O Box 221, Gaborone, Botswana; **India** -- Professor Arjun Dev,National Council of Educational Research and Training, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110016, India; **Northern Ireland** -- Dr Alan Smith, School of Education, University of Ulster, Coleraine, County Londonderry BT 52 1SA, Northern Ireland; **Zimbabwe** -- Ms Melania Rukanda, Standards Control and Professional Administration, Ministry of Education, P O Box CY 121, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe.

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1 Introduction

On the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998 it would be nice to say that human rights are now uncontentious for humanity. Nothing could be further from the truth. Human rights are flagrantly violated, otherwise there would be no need for international tribunals to investigate recent events in Bosnia and Rwanda. Furthermore, the nature of human rights is the subject of the most vigorous debate. It is important to to sketch this background before describing in more detail the nature and findings of an inquiry into the understanding of a sample of secondary school students in Botswana, India, Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe.

The Universal Declaration was followed in the 1960s by United Nations agreement to two supposedly complementary international covenants, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)[1] . In reality, at a time when the Cold War was still being fought, each covenant reflected the position of one of the two sides: the ICCPR reflected a view of liberal democracy, individual rights and free speech which was dear to the "capitalist West"; the ICESCR represented a more collectivist view promoted by the "socialist East" and many developing countries. Importantly the ICCPR was justiciable (rights could be tested in the courts), whereas by and large the ICESCR was regarded by courts in many countries as merely aspirational.

From the 1970s on, with the growth of the power of developing states in international fora and an increasing concern for global sustainability, a third layer of so-called "green rights" came to be added: the right to development, the rights of the child, and conventions outlawing discrimination against women and outlawing racism were among them. A huge growth in non-governmental organisations (NGOs) struggling for human rights led to a spread in the field and salience of rights, and to greater sophistication. Whereas in the 1960s it was assumed that only states would abuse rights and should be held accountable, by the 1980s it was recognised on the one hand that non-state actors relying on terror could also be abusers, and on the other that citizens and NGOs as well as states have a duty to promote rights.

The end of the Cold War, with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, was expected to lead to a much wider acceptance of rights. But although the UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 adopted the principle that all rights were important -- "universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated" -- it was clear that the debates were not concluded.

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[1] Although agreed in the 1960s the ICESCR did not enter into force until 3 January 1976, and the ICCPR on 23 March 1976.

The old argument between advocates of the ICCPR and ICESCR was not entirely stilled, although it was now often put in terms of Asian or Confucian values which were said to be different from those of the West or North, and which justified social restrictions in the name of economic growth and social cohesion. Variants of preference for ICESCR over ICCPR also came in the form of the "no-party democracy" of President Museveni in Uganda, and the Islamic theocracy of Iran and Afghanistan. Some countries objected that the North was using "human rights" as an excuse to interfere in their internal affairs, and that issues given international media prominence were questionable and selective.

The appearance of human rights groups supporting certain communities, such as the Kurds, or the Sri Lankan Tamils, added an extra nuance. Directly or indirectly such groups might seek the dissolution of existing states, while governments saw their human rights concern as a thin mask for separatism. The growth of single issue campaigns of other types -- for gay rights or the rights of the disabled, for example -- could stretch and challenge the rights coalition. As more and more human activities came under a rights umbrella might the concept afford less protection, and would those seeking it speak up when rights of other kinds were attacked?

Nonetheless the idea of human rights, born at the end of the 18th century in the US Declaration of Independence and the French Revolution, has come of age 200 years later. Statesmen and writers use it freely, and many citizens round the globe know what they mean. The Commonwealth of over 50 members, the product of an inversion of empire into free association, could hardly remain unaffected. The final phase of decolonisation in southern Africa required a clear victory over the racist philosophy of apartheid.

As a non-treaty, voluntary organisation which works by consensus, the Commonwealth approached human rights rather gingerly to begin with. The official Commonwealth declared its abhorrence of the Idi Amin regime in Uganda in 1977, but would not adopt a suggestion from The Gambia that it should set up a Human Rights Commission. Instead, in 1981, it authorised a small Human Rights Unit in the Commonwealth Secretariat with a coordinating, educational and promotional remit, but no powers to investigate complaints.

Although a coalition of Commonwealth NGOs came together in 1987 (the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative) to press for faster progress, it was not until the Harare Commonwealth Declaration of 1991 that the official Commonwealth started to speak and do more for human rights. This declaration led directly to the suspension of the military regime in Nigeria in 1995, after a catalogue of abuses was crowned by the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni. This suspension, followed by a type of suspension of the Sierra Leone junta in July 1997, put the Commonwealth in a vanguard position for rights in the international community.

However, the same kind of philosophic differences which exist outside it are represented inside the Commonwealth. Governments in both Malaysia and Singapore speak in favour of Asian values. The position of women in rural Islamic societies can be tightly constrained. Authorities justify actions which human rights groups deplore in many member states. But the Commonwealth, with a common official language and a wealth of non-governmental links in law, education, journalism and so on, also has unique opportunities in human rights.

The account which follows is of a three year study in a sample of secondary schools in Botswana, India, Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe, backed up by interviews with students, teachers and administrators, an audit of the curriculum, and a review of the materials and teacher education available. A questionnaire was administered to 915 students aged roughly 14 and 16 in 23 schools. It was designed as a key Commonwealth contribution to the UN Decade of Human Rights Education, and to see how far the education systems are currently providing an infrastructure for human rights in member states.

Specifically the project aimed to see:

* how national commitments to human rights instruments are reflected in the school curriculum

* whether young people are acquiring basic concepts in seven selected dimensions of human rights -- law and the administration of justice; equality of opportunity; history; civic and social rights and responsibilities; consumer rights; violence; and identity. (Older students were also asked about their experience of human rights education in school.)

* what difference approximately two years of study makes to the understanding of young people

* whether there are any significant variations between countries, by gender or between different types of school within the same country (for different school types were selected to provide contrasts in each)

* what are the key priorities identified in the four country samples for strengthening this area of the curriculum

* what scope there may be for Commonwealth cooperation in future

The results are indicative and suggestive rather than definitive or comprehensive. On this basis, however, we believe they will be of widespread interest in schools and Ministries throughout the Commonwealth and beyond.

2 Issues

a Relationships between Commonwealth membership, international conventions, national constitutions and school curricula

Human rights commitments in any Commonwealth country are of three kinds. There are those adopted in the constitution. Recent examples include the rights sections in the Namibian and South African constitutions. Older examples exist in the Indian constitution (developed at roughly the same time as the Universal Declaration and providing substantially the same commitments) and in the constitutions of the Caribbean states which, in the 1960s, frequently adopted texts from the European Convention on Human Rights. A second type of commitment arises from the precedents of the common law which in principle, though not always in practice, may influence decisions in other Commonwealth states.

A third type of commitment arises from the ratification of an international convention, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However a significant number of Commonwealth states have never ratified some of these conventions for various reasons, which may be different from an active objection to their content or the obligations they involve[2] . Nearly half of Commonwealth states have populations of a million or less, with the limited diplomatic and public service apparatus this implies. It can be difficult for small states to have the input into international agreements which provides a corresponding sense of ownership; further, the requirements of reporting and of overhauling domestic law can seem daunting to them.

But what connection, if any, exists between these commitments and Commonwealth membership on one side, and school curricula in over 50 diverse states on the other? Since the 1980s the communiqués from Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings have included exhortations to members to sign up to the ICCPR and ICESCR in particular. But it was only after the Harare Declaration, 1991, that membership of the Commonwealth could be said to imply a commitment to fundamental human rights, and these were not spelled out with the detail of international or regional conventions. Actually joining the Commonwealth, for most members, had been a natural part of the process by which a colony of the British Empire became a sovereign state, and rarely the subject of specific debate. .

As for the relation between human rights commitments and school curricula it is, for most members, still rather indirect. Where they are taught it is often as part of teaching on the constitution, or in such subjects as Education for

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[2] In January 1997, 23 Commonwealth states had not ratified the ICCPR; the same number had not ratified the ICESCR.

Living or Personal and Social Education[3] · Topics such as the Holocaust, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the anti-apartheid struggle may come up in history. Where the constitution has a strong stress on rights and responsibilities, as in India, it can exert a pervasive influence on the curriculum. The same impact may be expected in due course in South Africa.

More usually, however, the human rights components in school curricula appear there as contingent on other curricular or policy factors and do not reflect a broad philosophic or strategic commitment to human rights education. Article 42 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990, is typical of more recent conventions in stating, "States Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike." This injunction is not always followed.

b Content, ownership, cross-curricular or single subject

Because human rights have only recently been seen as important, and the degree of central direction in Commonwealth countries varies widely, it is impossible to generalise about the content, length and bias of teaching in this area. A 1994 report on secondary school arrangements in 25 member states and two Crown colonies[4] found that relevant teaching fell into a great variety of subjects: the constitution (eg Pakistan), social studies (eg Jamaica), moral education (eg Malaysia), religious education (eg Uganda), personal and social education (eg the Canadian provinces of Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan), history (eg India).

Few countries followed Cyprus in teaching compulsorily the basic rights and freedoms laid down in the Univeral Declaration, but in most their human rights work fell into one or sometimes two subjects. However, in an important group which included Australia, Britain, Brunei, Canada and India, the approach was more cross-curricular. (In England and Wales, in the early 90s, Citizenship was briefly introduced as a cross-curricular theme in secondary schools; it was then dropped as part of the simplification of the curriculum recommended by Sir Ron Dearing, leaving human rights as an option only.)

What emerged from this report was that there is not now an agreed syllabus that would cover human rights as perceived in the member states; that different curricular arrangements (including substantial decentralisation in countries like Canada) would make it impossible to introduce one; and that in consequence the amount of time devoted to human rights and related issues, and the impact on students, currently varies enormously.

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[3] See Bourne, *Commonwealth Values in Education*,Commonwealth Secretariat.

[4] Ibid

An extra variable is the degree of ownership that schools and teachers have over curricular learning, and their own motivations. Where there is an optional element, or the area lacks high status or strong Ministry promotion, these factors become extremely important. Adverse pressures can come from parents, where subjects are not seen as vocationally valuable, and from school authorities, if preference is given to examinable subjects and these are not.

However on the positive side there is evidence from several countries that the enthusiasm of teachers can have a beneficial impact. In the present study, for example, the keenness of teachers at one Harare school to gather materials on human rights made up for problems of low status of the key carrier subject, Education for Living, and in Botswana the involvement of teachers and students in a project called Peer Approach to Counselling by Teens (PACT) provided a supportive environment for human rights work.

c Resourcing, material, teacher preparation

Where the curricular status of a topic is vague, or lacking consistent promotion, it is inevitable that the resources to support it will be deficient or erratic. This issue has to be set in the context of the overall shortage of books, materials and basic school equipment which afflicts a large number of Commonwealth schools, not only in the poorest African states. The current project was launched therefore with an awareness of a need to boost the materials that could be available for schools, and with an interest in supportive teacher education, and the use that could be made of qualified NGO inputs.

In the present study the findings here may be summarised as follows:

Botswana: Books and materials were regarded as inadequate. In general, human rights were not covered in pre-service or in-service training of teachers. NGOs could be usefully involved, but teacher organisations were not seen as having a role.

India: Teachers and principals thought there was no lack of print materials, but audio-visual items and international documents were not readily available. Educational administrators thought more materials were needed, particularly modular materials for both teachers and students, on different aspects of human rights and the pedagogy of human rights. Human rights does not feature in pre-service teacher education and teachers and principals felt it should have special attention in in-service courses. The support of NGOs and teacher organisations was important.

Northern Ireland: There was no shortage of relevant materials, but they needed to be better coordinated and more accessible. Human rights do not currently feature in initial teacher training and ought to; they appear only incidentally in in-service courses on religious education, and in children's

rights and pastoral care courses. Overall there was a positive reaction to the involvement of NGOs.

Zimbabwe: Students and the research team agreed that there were no textbooks on human rights, although there were some posters on violence and booklets on women and law. Administrators believed there was an urgent need for training and support for teachers, both at pre-service and in-service level; they also valued the participation of NGOs and teacher associations.

d Effectiveness, examined or unexamined

The 1994 study had shown that Ministries of Education were wary of commenting on the effectiveness of teaching and learning in this area. A few quoted exam results in relevant subjects, Trinidad & Tobago suggested that social studies workshops for teachers had indicated a lack of teacher confidence, and several Ministries said that they relied on inspectors and curriculum officers to keep an eye on progress.

Throughout the world there are strong and contradictory views as to whether human rights and related matters are best assessed by exams or not, and a widespread recognition that in either case the experience of students in school and out is at least as important as what they are taught. In Botswana the present research recommended that human rights topics should be examinable. In India the majority of teachers interviewed thought that they should form part of an examination and would thereby gain greater attention from teachers and students; but a minority thought this would harm the kind of learning/teaching mode the field required, and it would be better to introduce them in classes not preoccupied with public exams. The educational administrators did not want exams.

In Northern Ireland there was an even split. Out of 15 teachers and advisers who were interviewed three thought there should be exams, three thought there should not, and the remaining nine had mixed feelings. In Zimbabwe the administrators interviewed were not in favour of examining human rights. They thought the focus should be on behaviour, attitudes and lifestyles, not easily examined. Their view tallied with that of students in all four countries, who felt there was a need to go beyond "talking about human rights" in the practice and ethos of a school.

Given the unsatisfactory status of exams as a test of young people's understanding, there would seem to be further scope for impact studies on the lines developed by the project committee for Commonwealth Values in Education.

3 Human rights and intercultural education in the Commonwealth

The state's implementation of human rights, and human rights education, is evolutionary in nature. Writers like Hobbes[5] affirmed only the right to life, by suggesting a restriction on the power of the state. The next stage included a right by the state to intervene to protect the rights of individuals and groups. A third stage has been the development of notions of social rights, to bring about greater equity through active intervention by the state.

Not all these rights, nor the nature of these rights, are accepted by all states across the Commonwealth. Nor are the older developed Commonwealth states necessarily in advance of the newer members in the Caribbean, Africa and Asia. Educational intiatiatives to teach about these rights have to be developed so that they can encompass the religious, linguistic, social, economic and cultural diversities across the Commonwealth. A conceptual framework, covering a range of these diversities, is therefore needed.

Questions of national integration and unity are as relevant to the ex-colonial territories as they are to New Zealand, Canada or Britain at the present time. Ethnic nationalism and devolution are some of the issues which many states confront. The Commonwealth Values project has highlighted the need for a type of teacher education which equips teachers with the knowledge, pedagogies and skills to teach human rights issues in classrooms with diverse student populations. In poorer schools, with knowedge-poor young people, there is a greater disparity of understanding of rights than for those who study in knowledge-rich institutions. The use of educational technologies and other measures which can equalise pupil understanding, and help both teachers and students to bridge this gap, therefore need attention.

Curricula and teaching materials in many schools are still inadequate for teaching purposes where student populations are diverse. Where linguistic and religious diversity impinge on education the challenge is to develop a common curriculum which encourages a shared value system, so that young people can function as democratic citizens in the cosmopolitan polities of today and the future.

This raises the extremely complicated question of what to choose from which cultures to devise a shared value system. This is where the intercultural issue intersects with human rights education for so many Commonwealth countries. If human rights education is perceived and constructed in purely "western" terms, it is liable to be rejected by "others" who assert oppositional Asiatic, Islamic or Afro-centric values. Such values may be based on falsely constructed notions of an ethnically purer past which their advocates seek to activate in educational contexts.

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[5] In "Leviathan"

On the other hand it is important to look beyond such regional or religious stereotyping. The Indian perspective, reflected not only in a constitution but in 50 years' practice of democracy in a large and varied population, points to the experience of a secular, civil libertarian polity. India, since independence, has sought to reflect and support a series of multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-cultural values.

The overwhelming diversities within the states which are members of the Commonwealth present their educators with an opportunity. How can they make use of the constitutional, democratic and modernising principles to which these states are signatory? In fact the issues raised in diverse societies are relevant to all, whether they consider themselves secular or theocratic, and neither effective human rights teaching, nor educational use of the international human rights instruments, are yet common in Commonwealth schools.

Two general problems frequently arise, one relating to religious schools, another to arguments derived from the claimed demands of political stability and economic development.

Many Commonwealth children still learn in religious schools, while having to live later on as adults in complex, multifaith societies. There is a need for more interfaith contacts between young people. Educational work is often lacking to promote the intercultural values of respect, equality, and acceptance and toleration of different groups, based on genuine inter-group and public values.

There are also intercultural issues in the way in which some governments use problems of political stability and economic development to excuse the denial of "western-style" human rights. Educators cannot fudge these questions. There have to be educational strategies which together enhance democratisation, political stability and economic development. It is the task of educators to explore how best to enhance universal rights by drawing from different cultural traditions, and demonstrating that universal rights are often locally rooted. Such work must also take account of the rights and needs of the marginalised, oppressed, indigenous and immigrant peoples in Commonwealth countries.

Hence the context for human rights education in the Commonwealth today is an intercultural one. It affects the experiences of youngsters at school, whether they even get to school at all -- for education too is a human right -- bullying, indiscipline and gender differences. Some aspects of the student questionnaire in the present project, relating to equality of opportunity and the different responses of "Protestant" and "Catholic" students in Northern Ireland, touched on this context. It deserves further inquiry and analysis

4 Methodology of a four country study

a Choice of countries, schools

Botswana, India, Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe agreed to join the project in 1995, following discussion with the Intercultural Centre for Intercultural Studies at the London University Institute of Education which had been in touch with other nations also. In addition to a willingness to participate, four other factors had to be considered: Commonwealth representativeness, support or concern for human rights in the country, convenience in managing the project, and financial cost.

Inevitably there was an arbitrary and fortuitous element in the final selection. With regard to Commonwealth representativeness, however, it was felt deisrable to include at least one developed country, and at least one with a relatively small population. It was necessary to obtain support from countries in different world regions, because the Commonwealth is a trans-regional association. Participation from India was particularly welcome, because over half the people in the 53 nation Commonwealth are citizens of that country. It was not, unfortunately, possible to include any Caribbean or Pacific nation.

While all Commonwealth countries assert their support for human rights, and none are totally immune from problems, it was felt that something more than the interest of an Education Ministry would be helpful in justifying inclusion in this study. While other states could also meet such criteria, it is worth observing certain positive elements in the four participants.

For example, Botswana has a particularly strong record in Africa of plural, multi-party democracy since independence; it was partly for that reason that it hosted a meeting of African Commonwealth leaders and political parties, to discuss democracy, in February 1997. India has recently established a National Human Rights Commission, has a strong culture of human rights NGOs, and is in the forefront of legal redress through public interest litigation based on its constitution. Northern Ireland, which has suffered from over 25 years of internal conflict, has the only compulsory curricular commitment in this field in Britain (Education for Mutual Understanding). Zimbabwe, the home of the Harare Commonwealth Declaration, 1991, has an inter-ministerial commitment at government level and strong NGOs.

Convenience and financial cost also came into the equation. At one stage the Institute of Education was exploring the involvement of five countries (almost a tenth of the Commonwealth membership) but lack of sufficient funding precluded this possibility. The then Overseas Development Administration in Britain and the Commonwealth Secretariat were only able to support work with developing countries, which meant that developed ones would have to pay for their own participation. There was a possible advantage in that two of the countries in the study are geographical neighbours.

In spite of the element of arbitrariness about the final selection, it was felt that inclusion of these four countries would give a sufficiently broad base to permit conclusions of wider significance. It was expected that other Commonwealth nations would wish to build on this work.

The international committee set up to oversee the project initially agreed to select a random sample of 100 students of 14 and 100 of 16 in five schools. An equal number of males and females were to be chosen. Because of the Standards system of forms or classes, in use in Botswana and Zimbabwe, this age difference could not be exact. But in principle the groups were separated by two years of schooling whose impact could be assessed. The students were told that their questionnaire responses would be kept confidential.

The choice of schools was left to the project team in each country, but the aim was to have a rough cross-section of institutions which would have differing characteristics and include main school types. Factors which might be aimed at included rural v urban, mixed v single sex, high status v lower prestige. If all the sample students had been drawn from the same type of school it might have given a misleading national picture, and obscured within-country differences.

The research phase took place in 1996, following trialling in Zimbabwe, Botswana and Britain. Schools were chosen as follows:

Botswana: Bokamoso Community Junior School in Gaborone, the capital, represented government urban schools. Legae Academy in Gaborone represented the exclusive private schools which charge for tuition and are often quite expensive. Capital Continuation Classes in Gaborone is a less privileged private night school catering in this study for students aged 17 to 37. Mosetlha Community Junior School is a government school in Bobonong, a rural village in central Botswana over 400km from the capital and 90km from the nearest town, with little influence from national media. Shakawe Community Junior School is a government school in a remote area, over 2000km from the capital. In Botswana the student questionnaires were delivered to classes of 40-43 students to fill out and then randomised in the office to produce ten male and ten female responses per class. Hence there were exactly 100 male and 100 female respondents.

India: Due to the huge population and expanse of India it was decided to select eight schools, four in rural and four in urban areas in four different states, Karnataka, Orissa, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. All schools are affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education, and are coeducational, and no private schools are included in the sample. All follow broadly the same courses of study at Upper Primary (classes VI-VIII) and Secondary (classes IX-X) stages, are subject to the same public exams at the end of the Secondary stage, and both English and Hindi are in use as languages for study as well as media of instruction. The total sample numbered 312 (151 girls and 161 boys). The schools were: D.M. School,

Mysore, Karnataka (urban); Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Shivaragudda, Mandya District, Karnataka (rural); D.M. School, Bhubaneswar, Orissa (urban); Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Munduli, District Cuttack, Orissa (rural); D.M. School, Ajmer, Rajasthan (urban); Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Nandla, District Ajmer, Rajasthan (rural); D.M. School, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh (urban); Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Pawarkheda, District Hoshangabad, Madhya Pradesh (rural).

Northern Ireland: Due to the sensitive situation in Northern Ireland, at a time when the then cease-fire was breaking down, the research team promised anonymity to the five schools participating in the project. School 1 is a controlled (Protestant) high school with around 450 male pupils, serving a deprived working class urban area with strong loyalist/Unionist/Protestant affiliations. School 2 is an elite coeducational grammar school (Protestant) for 1208 pupils in a large town with a rural catchment. School 3 is a coeducational Integrated school (ie serving both Protestant and Catholic communities) in a disadvantaged urban area, which is regarded as innovative and effective. School 4 is a coeducational (Catholic) secondary established by a merger of two schools three years ago, where almost half of students are eligible for free school meals, located in a town but with a large rural catchment. School 5 is an urban maintained (Catholic) girls' secondary school of 933 pupils in a strongly Nationalist/Republican area, which has been considered highly innovative and won many awards. The total sample involved 108 14 year olds and 106 16 year olds, of whom 108 were male and 106 female.

Zimbabwe: The research team selected five schools of differing characteristics in the Harare Region (Educational Province); due to local circumstances they obtained 97 responses from the Form II students (the younger group), of whom 54 were males and 43 females, and 92 from the Form IV's (the older group), of whom 50 were males and 42 females. The schools were: Prince Edward, a government-owned boys' boarding school set up in the colonial era for white pupils, now a well-resourced multiracial school recruiting from well-to-do families; Girls High, a government-owned girls' boarding school, similar in history and present circumstances to Prince Edward; Zengeza 1 High, a coeducational day school set up just prior to independence in Chitungwiza, a not so affluent dormitory for Harare, now with large student numbers (2101) and short of classrooms and teaching materials; Domboramwari Secondary, a church-owned coeducational day school set up in the 1990s in a shanty, peri-urban suburb, serving low income families and poorly endowed with resources; and Mufakose 2 High, a government coeducational day school of 2220, opened after independence in a high density suburb, serving low income families and short of resources.

b Conceptual Map

At its first meeting, in London in November 1995, the international project committee discussed what dimensions should be covered if students were to

demonstrate a basic understanding of human rights. The aim was to choose aspects which might be expected to appear in the different curricula and school systems of the four countries, and which together would provide a fair coverage. Inevitably the selection was arbitrary: law and the administration of justice; equality of opportunity; history; civic and social rights and responsibilities; consumer rights; violence; and identity. It was left to the London Institute of Education to devise a student questionnaire which could measure students' understanding.

Undoubtedly other issues could have been included, and some matters of particular interest in these and other Commonwealth countries were omitted. The case for these dimensions may be summarised thus:

An understanding of principles of justice was felt to be fundamental. The idea of equality of opportunity, in areas like employment and gender, was considered essential to human rights as they have developed in the twentieth century. History is a panorama of abuse, struggle and articulation of rights, and can be taught in ways which explain these. Civic and social rights and responsibilities were included not only to cover the important sector of economic and social rights, but to test awareness that rights denote corresponding responsibilities.

Consumer rights are not always covered in a human rights rubric, but the committee decided to include them because in modern circumstances there are important public and individual concerns in relation to advertising, commerce and the supply of information. Protection from violence, sometimes defined as the right to a peaceful existence, was deemed an essential component. A person's identity was to be included not only as a key building block for human rights, but because it is often an issue in adolescence.

Guidance from the project as to how these concepts might be understood stated:

Law and the administration of justice: citizens may only be arrested according to the law; police and security agencies should behave according to the law and be publicly accountable; innocence is presumed until guilt is proven; there are proper guarantees for the defence in court; trials are public; the judiciary is independent; prisoners are not mistreated.

Equality of opportunity: people should have equal opportunities in their rates of pay, in their ability to use public services (including education and health), in their access to justice, according to different parameters -- gender, age, ethnic, religious, linguistic, etc; that rights are inevitably denied when there is discrimination which cannot be defended in terms of the interests of those who appear to be discriminated against.

History: an understanding that rights have been denied in history, and that much conflict has originated from a denial of rights -- eg the Indian freedom movement from the denial of political rights in India during the British Empire, the civil war in Zimbabwe from the denial of majority rights by the white minority regime, the recent troubles in Northern Ireland as a result of discrimination against the Catholic/Republican community; an awareness that history has often been written by the winners, who have overlooked or denied the rights of the defeated; an awareness of how human rights have been enlarged in the course of history (eg the US Civil War and the campaigns of Wilberforce in the abolition of human slavery); an appreciation that the arrival of political democracy or national independence does not mean that a struggle for rights has ended (eg the Harare Commonwealth Declaration, military dictatorships in Nigeria since independence, the struggle for women's rights in democracies).

Civic and social rights and responsibilities: the right to vote, to be informed about what the government and public authorities do; freedoms of expression, association, and religion; the right to education; responsibility to obey just laws, to pay taxes, to support the rights of fellow-citizens; trying to combine economic, social, cultural and development rights with democratic civil and political rights; being aware of the constitution; having opportunities to practise rights and responsibilities.

Consumer rights: the right to know what a product is or contains (for instance the content of a tin of food); the right to redress if a product or service does not do what it claims; rights to information in a form that can be readily understood (ie not incomprehensible "small print", or guarantees which are difficult to realise); a right to public services which are not corrupt or biased by bribery.

Violence: violence inevitably threatens the rights of those against whom it is deployed; there is a distinction between legitimate violence used by the state (when a policemen grabs a robber to disarm him), and illegitimate state violence (when a policeman hits a citizen for no reason) and illegitimate private violence (when a man beats his wife); negotiation or mediation strategies may provide ways of settling a quarrel which respect rights; bullying threatens the rights of children; children have rights; people have a right to feel safe.

Identity: a person's right to a name; a child's right to be respected and valued; the rights of parents to bring up children as they wish within the law; a right to hold and develop one's own language, culture and religion; a right to arbitrate or have a voice in the arbitration when differing rights appear to be in conflict (ie the right to an autonomous moral and political judgement).

c Relationship between student survey and contextual inquiries

The core of the study rests on the student survey in the four countries, which was first analysed by each national team. But it was agreed that this would only make sense in a wider context. Additional elements undertaken were:

i An initial survey, in each country, of how human rights are treated in that country's secondary school curriculum, and the materials for students and other types of support (including initial and in-service training) which are available for teachers.

ii Qualitative interviews with each of the heads and two of the teachers from each of the schools in the study. These sought to test teacher views on objectives, achievements and problems -- the aim of education for human rights, the suitability of the syllabus and resources available, and the school context for the student survey. They were to be supplemented by interviews with a number of educational administrators or advisers, with a similar purpose.

Specific issues covered were: perceptions of human rights education in the curriculum and its effectiveness; school ethos and human rights education; relevant teacher education; availability of learning materials; the age at which human rights concepts should be introduced; the potential for Commonwealth cooperation; the role of teacher associations and NGOs; whether or how there should be exams; views on a cross-curricular, permeation, infusion or single subject strategy; the scope for new Ministry initiatives.

iii Qualitative follow-up interviews with a 10 per cent sample (that is, ten students aged roughly 14 and ten aged roughly 16) in each country, to discover how they perceived this curriculum, what impressed them and so on. These interviews enabled researchers to check beyond the questionnaire, to see how far students in the two age groups had a genuine understanding of the concepts involved.

Topics included possible difficulty with the questionnaire; whether human rights are important and the familiarity of the term; whether the seven dimensions of the Conceptual Map are being covered at school; whether there are adequate resources (such as textbooks or copies of the constitution); whether the student's family is interested in human rights; and whether they are better covered in one or two subjects or as a cross-curricular theme.

The basic methodology of the study was intended to be simple, in order that it could be carried out in varied circumstances by busy people. Interviews were semi-structured, not expected to last for more than an hour at most, and in fact were conducted differently in the various countries. For example in India three teachers from each of the project schools were interviewed together, separately from school principals; in Northern Ireland educational

advisers rather than administrators were interviewed; in Botswana ten administrators were interviewed.

The curriculum audit provided a policy and analytical framework in each country and the interview material was used in two ways -- to amplify and contextualise the raw data arising from the student questionnaires, and to support the project's recommendations to the Commonwealth Education Ministers' Conference, 1997.

d Nature of an impact study

The object was to see how far students are learning about human rights at secondary school. In an ideal world this study would have been longitudinal, to assess how the young people in the sample had altered their understanding of human rights concepts as they progressed upwards. Shortage of time and resources meant that two snapshots, of students' responses at two ages, were obtained instead.

In this study, where national teams had discretion and varied resources available for their analysis, comparisons between the younger and older age groups were made for every question in India and Zimbabwe; on some questions in Northern Ireland where there seemed to be an age-related discrepancy; and for no questions in Botswana.

The difficulties in this approach to testing impact by a comparison of two snapshots go beyond the obvious fact that the nature of the curriculum and the degree to which human rights issues are discussed outside the school (in media, home or peer group) must affect the responses. In fact in Botswana the congruence of the syllabus studied by this group of students with the Conceptual Map was minimal, and mainly confined to one subject, social studies. In Northern Ireland the responses from one ("Protestant") school were probably affected by local controversy about marching traditions at the time the questionnaire was applied in 1996. In Zimbabwe the effect of the Commonwealth summit in 1991 had probably been greater in the Harare area, where the sample schools were picked, than it would have been in schools further from the capital.

Furthermore there is a difficulty in equating questionnaire answers, or even interview responses, with broader attitudes which may lead to action or inaction. Where topics transcend academic knowledge and touch students' values there must always be an element of caution in interpreting the reliability of the data. However, as with opinion poll data on public issues, such material is at least as good as any other that can be obtained by means of social science and has to be taken as a baseline.

The greatest limitation in the study is, rather, the smallness of the overall sample. It should be emphasised again that the results are to be regarded as indicative only, and not definitive even for the countries which took part.

They describe the material obtained from these 23 project schools when the survey was made in 1996.

e Questions that students could understand

The student questionnaire (see Section 6) aimed to be equally straightforward for respondents in each country. Each group of questions corresponded to a separate dimension in the Conceptual Map. The first two groups -- on law and the administration of justice, and on equality of opportunity -- described commonplace incidents of an apparent theft from a shop and an interview for a job, and built questions round them. The remaining groups were more abstract and conceptual in nature, and asked the students to rank their answers in terms of agreement/disagreement, importance/unimportance and so on. Each batch of questions concluded with at least one that was open-ended, to provide for a student input which might be divergent.

It is not easy to devise questions which can be equally meaningful in varied societies. For instance, in Northern Ireland, where many court houses are fortified and juvenile cases are not heard in public, 56.5% of the sample answered No to the question, "Would you expect members of the public to watch the case being tried in court?" In Botswana, where media penetration is not high and there is no national television service although South African TV channels are received, it was inevitable that students would report that media had played a less prominent role in promoting understanding. Botswana answers about advertising and consumer rights may also have been affected.

Broadly speaking the students said they understood the term human rights, and had little difficulty with the questionnaire. One or two questions may have been overly complex -- for instance Indian researchers thought it might have been more productive to have separated religious from other freedoms in the question, "Imagine that you are a grown-up adult in your country. How important do you think it is for you and the well-being of your country that you and your friends should....Be free to join societies, political parties, trade unions, and to follow the religion of your choice?"

In Zimbabwe there was an interesting response to the question, "All countries suffer from fights and murders. Fights in the home can result in injuries. Violence is much worse where there is a war or civil war. Do you think...people who use weapons or violence do so because they think they are stronger?" Of the younger group 52.9% disagreed, as did 47.8% of the older ones -- presumably because they saw a resort to weapons as a sign of weakness, a response or perhaps an interpretation which was different from that in the other three countries where the majority saw the use of violence as being resorted to by those who think they are stronger.

f What "is" and what "ought" to be

The questionnaire was not only concerned with understanding at different scholastic stages, but with students' ability to distinguish between reality in their societies and what they thought ought to happen, in terms of human rights or the national constitution. This approach was taken in order to ground the questionnaire in students' experience of their neighbourhoods, so that they could start by relating human rights issues to situations they knew.

The questions on law and the administration of justice, where a policeman catches a suspected thief, asked for instance, "Would you expect the policement to beat the person and put him or her in prison?" then later, "In this incident , what do you think should happen?" and finally, "From your experience, what do you think would really happen in practice if this incident took place near where you live?"

The students were generally sophisticated in their replies. In this particular question, 72.1% of the Indian sample thought the policeman would indeed beat the person and put him or her in prison. But when asked the open-ended question about what should happen, 40.7% opted for compassion, leniency, an awareness of the social causes of crime and a proper judicial process, and 33.7% mentioned trial and punishment according to the law, with humane treatment; only 17.9% actually supported the idea that police should beat up the person ahead of a judicial process. When finally the Indian sample was asked what would really happen nearby, in a second open-ended question, 50% still expected unlawful police action with bribery or beating.

As in adult opinion polling the student respondents were not entirely logical in their sequence of replies. For instance in Zimbabwe there were contradictory responses to successive questions about equality of opportunity in employment. The introductory statement read, "You see four persons applying for a job who have the same qualifications and the same experience. Two are men and two are women. The persons come from different tribes, races, religions and speak different languages. What do you think will really happen in practice?...A person will get the job who is most like the people who make the appointment in terms of their sex, tribe, race, religion and language?"

In response 49.5% of the younger and 56.5% of the older Zimbabwean groups answered Yes. But 70.1% of the younger and 81.5% also said Yes to the next question, "In practice the person who will get the job will be the one who performs best at the interview test?" Coming back to this in the final open-ended question 75.3% of the younger and 88% of the older groups said that the job should be awarded on merit.

g Linguistic issues

The survey was originally compiled in English. However in many Commonwealth countries including Botswana, India and Zimbabwe, English is a second or third language for citizens, often only learned at the secondary stage. Not all the samples were comfortable with it.

In India the questionnaire was translated into Hindi, and roughly half the sample answered the Hindi version. In Zimbabwe, in the question relating to possible bribe-taking by officials the Shona word *chiokomuhomwe* was added in explanation; "assessors" were added to "judge and jury". In Botswana "consumer rights" were described as "buyer rights" and questions were translated into local languages where students said they had difficulty. In Northern Ireland the reference to colonialism in the history section may have caused some difficulties, either because the word was not understood, or because of contested views of the history of Britain and Ireland.

However only in Botswana does it seem that a lack of linguistic confidence may have had some effect. A lower response rate on some questions there and a greater shyness with the open-ended ones in particular may be explained by this reason.

5 Significant country variables

The school and curricular structures of each of the four countries are of course quite distinct. It is necessary to sketch these, and key points which arose from the interviews, before analysing the findings of the student survey.

a Botswana

The basic school structure provides for seven years of primary schooling starting at the minimum age of six years in the public schools, followed by three years of junior and two years of senior secondary schooling. In 1996, at the time of this study, a third year of junior secondary schooling was being phased in.

The philosophy of the current Ten Year Basic Education (TYBE) policy embraces some concepts of human rights. Its *Curriculum Blueprint* states, among other objectives, that it "develops moral, ethical and social values, cultural identity, self esteem and good citizenship; prepares citizens to participate actively to further develop our democracy and prepares them for life in the 21st century."

Botswana follows an infusion policy which allows for the accommodation of emerging issues. In the former nine year scheme (followed by students who answered the questionnaire) the carrier subject for human rights was social studies, and only one topic -- "Our Government" -- was relevant. In the new

syllabus there are more topics related to human rights principles and practices -- concepts, violations, responses to violations, gender issues and children's rights.

Also moral education and guidance and counselling are making a contribution, for example in a practical approach involving cooperation between the Ministry of Education and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) called Peer Approach to Counselling by Teens (PACT).

Given that the changes to the curriculum had not affected them, it is perhaps not surprising that 13 out of the 20 students interviewed in depth said that the questionnaire was hard. Of the ten teachers and administrators interviewed, six said human rights were not taught to teachers at all, and three said partly; nine thought they were only partly covered in school work. Among the students, the average reply was that only three out of the seven dimensions of the Conceptual Map were being taught; they had particular difficulty with the question about the law and administration of justice, partly because theft was seen as rare in Botswana

Teachers, administrators and students were virtually unanimous that books and supporting materials were inadequate. A majority of the students (12 out of 20) said their families were interested in human rights, and 18 out of 20 said they were best treated as a cross-curricular them rather than in one or two subjects.

All the teachers and administrators said they wanted to see NGOs involved. There was unanimity that a stronger policy for human rights education was needed and nearly all wanted work to begin in primary school; nine out of ten wanted human rights to be examined. In order to make a cross-curricular or infusion approach work they felt there should be more effective pre-service training for teachers, a greater clarity in objectives, and monitoring of what happens in the classroom. They did not see a role for teachers' professional associations.

b India

The first ten years of schooling in India, divided into primary, upper primary and secondary stages, provide for general education with an undifferentiated curriculum. All curricular areas are compulsory for all students.

Some of the major components relating to human rights are: the basic features of the Indian political system and constitution; problems and challenges of contemporary Indian life; the diversity and variety of Indian culture; the Indian social system and dynamics of social change; major events in Indian and world history relating to struggles for political, civil, economic and social rights, and the role played by common people and outstanding leaders; the world human rights situation, particularly the violations of

colonialism, racism and apartheid; relevant literary works; the biological unity of the human species; major historical documents such as the US Declaration of Independence, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

At the upper primary stage the major subject areas relevant to human rights education are social sciences, science and languages. At the secondary stage there is a significant input in social sciences (history, geography, civics and economics). in science and languages.

All areas listed in the Conceptual Map are covered in the school curriculum in one form or another. The approach is cross-curricular and issues which are integral to a particular subject are covered within it. Thus issues relating to law and the administration of justice, to equality of opportunity, to civic and social rights and responsibilities, and the legitimacy or otherwise of violence by the state, are dealt within Civics courses at various levels. Colonialism and independence are covered in the History syllabus.

In the project interviews, therefore, it was not surprising that most students said that, except for violence and identity, all other dimensions were covered in the curriculum, particularly in Civics and History. Teachers thought the areas missing were violence and consumer rights. But there was a widespread consensus that most issues are being covered, though the educational administrators thought there was a need to look again at the curriculum, identify inadequacies, and update and enrich it. There had been no major studies before on the impact on students.

At present human rights do not feature in pre-service teacher education, but the topic is now included in in-service programmes, although teachers and principals considered it received little attention there. As far as materials were concerned, the major shortage was in the audio-visual area.

Students, teachers and administrators all endorsed the cross-curricular approach. Teachers and principals wanted a more elaborate treatment of the various concepts, emphasised the importance of the language curriculum and of an interactive mode of teaching and learning. Interview respondents were divided on the question of exams.

While some human rights ideas could be introduced earlier, the general view was that the age of 11 was the right time to start. It was felt that there are no major policy issues involved in human rights education.

c Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland system is segregated by religion, in that most children attend predominantly Protestant ("controlled") schools or Catholic ("maintained") schools; by ability (and some would argue social background) in that a selection system operates at age 11 to decide which children attend grammar schools (attended by around one third); and often by gender (particularly in second level education, where almost half of all grammar schools and a quarter of other secondary schools are single sex).

Altogether, young people are required to spend twelve years at school between 4 and 16, and pupils spend a minimum of five years in second level schools.

Inevitably the conflict in Northern Ireland over the past 25 years has implications for the school curriculum, and helps to explain why Northern Ireland is the only part of the United Kingdom to have a statutory commitment to something approaching human rights education. This is in the form of a cross-curricular theme called *Education for Mutual Understanding* (EMU).This is one of six cross-curricular themes which are not timetabled subjects in their own right, but which all teachers are expected to take account of when planning programmes of study.

The aims of EMU, which are largely focused on inter-communal understanding within Northern Ireland, are to enable pupils to "respect and value themselves and others; to appreciate the interdependence of people within society; to know about and understand what is shared as well as what is different about their cultural traditions; and to appreciate how conflict may be handled in non-violent ways. "[6]

In addition to EMU, the audit of the statutory curriculum in Northern Ireland indicated human rights opportunities across a range of timetabled subjects, although this work is not currently referred to as "human rights education" in an explicit way. History, English, religious education, environmental and developmental aspects of geography and personal and social education (PSE) would appear to offer most potential. Currently, in History, students may study the changing status of women, the Holocaust, the use of atomic weapons, the break-up of the European empires, the growth of the Commonwealth and United Nations, and civil rights movements.

In PSE there are modules on family life and parenting, rights and responsibilities in the community, taxation, equal opportunities, and employment rights and responsibilities. There are plans to introduce a module on "political understanding"which would include politics and

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[6] Smith A and Robinson A in Education for Mutual Understanding: Perceptions and Policy, University of Ulster, surveyed post-primary schools carrying out voluntary EMU policies just before EMU became compulsory.

government, civil liberties, law and order, and citizenship. However PSE programmes are developed at school level, so the quality of implementation can vary.

Interviews with the students indicated that they had little overall understanding (the big picture), but found it easier to respond to the practical issues presented in the questionnaire. They had some difficulty with it, particularly in answering the open-ended questions. They felt that law and the administration of justice and identity were not adequately dealt with by the curriculum; 14 year olds also mentioned civic and social rights and responsibilities.

All the teachers and advisers saw human rights as important, thought that they should be reflected in school ethos, and that there is no specifically human rights focus currently in the curriculum. Human rights as a term is somewhat problematic in Northern Ireland, being regarded by many Protestants/Unionists as synonymous with civil rights and agitation by Catholics/Nationalists. The majority of teachers and advisers favoured a cross-curricular approach, as it was felt that human rights should permeate the curriculum.

Teachers were evenly divided on the question of using a cross-curricular approach alone, or a dual cross-curricular and modular strategy. Advisers favoured the dual option as there has been much criticism of the efficacy of cross-curricular delivery[7] . Human rights do not currently feature in teacher education, either at initial or in-service levels. It was considered that this situation should be redressed, and might need a Ministerial directive.

d Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe embarked on a drastic reorientation and expansion of its education system after independence in 1980. The structure now includes a primary cycle of seven years from around 6 to 13, followed by three phases of two years each in secondary education.

Through education the government is seeking to build a firm unitary state, aiming to produce citizens who are able to realise their civic responsibilities and legal obligations. Consequently all school curricula should reflect the multi-ethnic character and diversities of the nation, and should be relevant to the requirements of the country's development. Civic education is taught through a number of subjects, including social studies, religious and moral education, education for living, languages and history.

The Commonwealth Values research team carried out an inquiry in the five schools selected for the project and focused on five compulsory subjects in

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[7] Whitty, Rowe and Aggleton, Subjects and themes in the secondary school curriculum, London.

the first two years of the secondary curriculum which seemed to be in line with the seven dimensions of the Conceptual Map. These were Shona and Ndebele (the major local languages), English, religious and moral education, and Education for Living.

This survey showed that, although opportunities to teach human rights abound in the language subjects, teachers were more concerned with improving language skills and the ability to communicate. Religious and moral education is not seen as relevant to human rights in the schools. While history shows the struggle for political, economic and social rights, the teachers do not always give it a human rights interpretation. Syllabus options also do not necessarily lend themselves to a human rights interpretation.

Education for Living, introduced after independence, was supposed to be compulsory but had been pushed to the back seat in most of the schools visited. Although of obvious significance in understanding political, economic and social rights it was the least valued secondary school subject in terms of time allocation, textbook provision and the preparation and support of teachers.

In the interviews, all 20 students thought human rights important. Among dimensions in the Conceptual Map they expressed greatest concern over a lack of coverage of law and the administration of justice, and equality of opportunity. A majority of pupils in three of the five schools thought the teachers and authorities were taking human rights seriously, and all pupils thought their parents were interested (though some said that fathers were less interested in gender issues).

Interviews with heads and subject heads revealed strong agreement that the training and support of teachers should be a key priority, since human rights are not yet included in initial training. They wanted a start on human rights at the primary stage, and thought that teachers' associations and NGOs had a role. They felt that the first task was to revive Education for Living and raise its status, since they thought it should be the greatest carrier of human rights concepts.

6 Findings of the study of student perceptions

Due to national circumstances there were minor variations in the questionnaire put to students. Each section was preceded by an introductory statement and, before they started, some were told, "You have been selected to take part in an important study involving selected young people in four Commonwealth countries -- Botswana, India, Northern Ireland in Britain and Zimbabwe. It aims to find out what you know about human rights and similr issues, and will assist schools in future."

a Law and the administration of justice

The introduction was, *You see a policeman catch someone who is running away with an article taken from a shop* . [Six questions follow, and students were asked to tick or answer YES or NO to each. The last two questions are open-ended.]

i Would you expect the policeman to beat the person and put him or her in prison?

ii Would you expect the person to be tried in a court of law?

iii Would you expect the person to have a [friend] or lawyer who can examine witnesses and plead in his or her defence?

iv Would you expect members of the public to watch the case being tried in court?

v Would you expect that the judge or jury will not decide as to whether the person stole the article until after they have heard the case?

vi Would you expect that the policeman will take a bribe either from the thief or from the shop owner?

vii In this incident, what do you think <u>should</u> happen?

viii From your experience, what do you think would <u>really</u> happen in practice if this incident took place near where you live?

The aim of this group of questions was to see whether students understood that extra-judicial action by police is unlawful; that a person accused of theft has a right to a trial; that an accused person has a right to defence; that trials are held in public; that a judge or jury should not decide until they have heard the case.

The key findings here were:

i That the samples were able to distinguish between might happen in practice, and what ought to happen -- that is to say they had a good grasp of the human rights principles which should apply even while they recognised that there could be unlawful action by the police or the public. Hence 40.5% of the Botswana sample and 72.1% of the Indian sample expected that a policemen would beat the person and put him or her in prison. However 91.6% of the Northern Ireland sample did not expect this and, while 41.1% of the younger Zimbabwe group expected a beating to happen, 88% of the 16 year olds did not.

When pressed to ask what would happen if the incident occurred in their neighbourhood 50% of the Indian sample expected unlawful action by the

police. In Botswana only 30% replied, of which half said that the crowd would beat up the thief. In Northern Ireland 17.3% thought the due process of law would be followed, 16.4% thought the offender would be given a second chance, but 11.7% thought that violence would be used, or guilt would be assumed, or the judge would be over-influenced by the police evidence.

But, answering the open-ended question on what should happen, 70.1% of the Botswana respondents said that the police should act according to the law and follow the set procedure. In India, 40.7% talked of compassion, leniency, and the social causes of crime while not ignoring the judicial process; 33.7% stressed trial and punishment according to the law, but also mentioned humane treatment; only 17.9% supported the idea of police beating up the person.

Only amongst the older group in India (Class XI students) was there a majority which expected a bribe to be taken (53.3%). In Botswana 30% expected a bribe to be taken and in Zimbabwe the 16 year olds were slightly more pessimistic than their juniors -- 25.3% expected a bribe to be taken. In Northern Ireland only 6.1% expected a bribe to be taken, while 75.7% did not.

ii That the samples understood that a person accused of theft was entitled to a court trial. The responses here ranged from the lowest expectation in India (where 67% expected this to happen, while 31.4% did not) up to Zimbabwe, (where 88.8% expected this to happen). In Northern Ireland the expectation of "due process" was slightly higher among female and younger students, and there was a significant difference between the lower expectations (71.8%) in a "Protestant" all-boys urban secondary school, as compared with the much higher expectations (93.2%) in a "Catholic", coeducational, rural secondary school.

iii That the samples had a good grasp of the concept of innocence until guilt is proved, and that an accused person is entitled to a defence. The lowest margin answering YES to the question about a lack of prejudgment by judge or jury was in India (70% YES to 28.1% NO), but it was still overwhelming. The YES response came from 71.3% in Botswana, 84.6% in Northern Ireland and 89.2% in Zimbabwe. In Northern Ireland there was a difference along the religious divide, with the "Protestant" group more likely to anticipate that a case might be prejudged than the "Catholic" students.

Similar majorities thought that the accused would have a lawyer or friend to help defend them, although there were differences by age. In India 8% more of the older group expected the person would have a lawyer, whereas in the Zimbabwe sample 70.5% of the 14 year olds but only 60.9% of the 16 year olds expected this. In Northern Ireland there was again a distinction on the religious line, with the lowest expectation (71.8%) being in the "Protestant", all-boys, urban secondary school and highest in the "Catholic", all-girls, urban secondary school (94.7%).

iv The least confident response concerned justice being seen to be done, and public access to the courts.

In Botswana, the concept of public access was held by a relatively small majority -- 57.5% to 40.5%. In India, 69.2% expected the public would be able to watch, with a greater expectation among the older group. In Northern Ireland a majority -- 56.5% to 43% -- did not expect the public to be able to watch the trial. In Zimbabwe 69.1% of the 14 year olds and the same percentage of 16 year olds expected the public to attend.

The explanation for the Northern Ireland response may have been threefold: that the students knew that the Juvenile courts, with which they might have most contact, are not open to the public; a belief that all courts in Northern Ireland are not open to the public due to the prevailing security situation (although this is not true); or a view that members of the public would not be motivated to attend a mere shoplifting case.

In conclusion: It could be said that most secondary school students understood the concepts illustrated, but significant minorities did not. The public justice system in any country, to be democratically effective, needs the consent and understanding of virtually the whole population. This section of the survey reveals significant between-country differences, and that there was not always a progression between the younger and older age-groups. It was noteworthy that in Botswana and India, where expectations of police and public behaviour were pessimistic, students retained an accurate, rights-based view of what ought to happen.

b Equality of opportunity

The introduction was, *You see four persons applying for a job who have the same qualifications and the same experience. Two are men and two are women. The persons come from different races, cultures and religions [also tribes, languages and castes]. What do you think will really happen in practice?* [Five YES/NO questions follow, and then an open-ended question.]

i The person will get the job who is most like the people making the appointment in terms of their sex, race and religion [also tribes, languages and castes] ?

ii The person will get the job who performs best at the interview test?

iii One of the two men will get the job?

iv Either the youngest or the oldest of the four will get the job?

v Will three of them have reasons for complaints if the one who performed worst at the interview test was given the job?

vi Who do you think should get the job?

The object of this group of questions was to get students to think about equality of opportunity in employment; specifically they had to consider the situation in their own societies with regard to similarities between those appointing to jobs and those appointed, the acceptance of "quality" or meritocratic criteria, racism etc, gender equality and ageism. Finally the open-ended question required them to suggest what they thought was a fair basis for an appointment.

The key findings here were:

i That the samples showed some confusion as to how far meritocratic considerations currently apply to appointments to jobs in their own countries. The first, second and fifth questions represented different ways of coming at this issue, and the answers did not tally, thus:

% YES

	Like appointers, i	*Best at interview, ii*	*Justified complaint, v*
BOTSWANA	43.0	86.0	63.0
INDIA (14)	37.5	71.9	53.1
INDIA (16)	46.7	64.5	60.5
NORTHERN IRELAND	57.9	67.3	85.5
ZIMBABWE (14)	49.5	70.1	71.1
ZIMBABWE (16)	56.5	81.5	74.7

(Nb National teams in India and Zimbabwe provided a comparative analysis of responses at around 14 and around 16 for all questions, whereas in Northern Ireland these differences were only reported where significant and in Botswana it was not possible to make this analysis.)

There is an obvious contradiction between the idea of likeness to the appointing persons in gender, ethnicity, religion etc and the more open, meritocratic idea that the "best at the interview" should get the job. Similarly, although the four countries do not share equally in a "complaining culture" over employment, and there are significant differences in legislation and the state of the labour market, one might expect a greater parallelism between the answers about the best interview performer getting the job, and the justice of complaints if, instead, the worst interviewee is offered the post. Only for the older group in India and the younger group in Zimbabwe was there an approximation between these two responses.

ii In spite of this confusion the final, open-ended question showed that the samples were overwhelmingly of the opinion that the best qualified, in terms of skills, qualifications and experience, should get the job. This view was expressed by 82.5% in Botswana, 85.9% in India, 83.7% in Northern Ireland, and 81.6% in Zimbabwe (where significantly more of the older group than the younger group stated this.)

iii That, although all countries had seen campaigns for gender equality, at least a third and sometimes nearer a half of the national samples thought that a man would always get the job when male and female applicants were equally qualified. Only among the younger Zimbabweans was there a majority which believed that the man would get the job (by 51.5% to 48.5%), but the comparable figures expecting a man to be appointed were 46% in Botswana, 32.7% in India, 39.7% in Northern Ireland and 46.2% among the older Zimbabweans.

iv That ageism was perceived as less significant than sexism. In no country was there a majority for the view that youth or age would be decisive in obtaining a job. The view that in practice neither the youngest nor the oldest would get the job was held by 56% in Botswana, 83% in India, 76.2% in Northern Ireland (where female students were more likely than males to take this line), and 64% in Zimbabwe (where younger students were more likely to respond in this way.)

In conclusion: Most of this section required students to focus on their own countries, looking at different dimensions which might apply to recruiting procedures, and only at the end were they asked to state what they thought ought to happen. The questions were not easy, since in every country "ideal" fair employment practices can be subverted and in India (where 5.8% said that the most needy should get the job and another 4.5% referred to the most qualified and needy) a policy of affirmative action reserves jobs for depressed classes (eg Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) and in some situations for women. The most striking result was the support for a non-discriminatory approach based on merit: over 80% of each country sample believed that the best qualified person should get the job, irrespective of race, culture, religion, sex or age.

c History

The introductory statement was, *Colonialism, which is the owning of one country and the control of its people by another country, is now thought to be wrong.* [Five questions follow, which may be answered STRONGLY AGREE, AGREE, DON'T KNOW, DISAGREE and STRONGLY DISAGREE; the first three relate to attitudes to colonialism, the second two to the period after independence; the last question is open-ended.]

i Do you think it is wrong because the country that owns another is taking money and riches from it?

ii Do you think it is wrong because people in every country should be free to choose their own leaders/government and way of life?

iii Do you think it is wrong because people in the colonised country have to obey orders from the government of another country?

iv When the country is independent and the people can choose their own government and laws, can you be sure that the rights of all the people in that country will be respected?

v Do people need to vote, to obey the law and take an active interest in what goes on around them if everyone is to be able to enjoy their rights?

vi What else do people in an independent country need to do to enjoy their rights?

The aim of this group of questions, which recognised that for most Commonwealth states their independence followed a period as colonies within the British Empire, was twofold. First they were asked to consider why they thought colonialism was wrong in a rights context (whether for economic or for political reasons); second, they had to say whether political independence actually guaranteed rights (as many independence constitutions aspired), and what more people could then do to enjoy their rights.

The key findings here were:

i The strongest agreement, in all four samples, was for the positive statement that people should be free to choose their leaders and way of life. Thus:

% AGREE + STRONGLY AGREE

	Choosing leaders/life , ii	*Have to obey, iii*	*Money and riches, i*
BOTSWANA	70	56	61
INDIA (14)	89.4	63.1	67.4
INDIA (16)	89.5	79	82.2
NORTHERN IRELAND	87.4	70.5	69.1
ZIMBABWE (14)	89.6	58.3	82.3
ZIMBABWE (16)	90.1	67	89

Except in Northern Ireland therefore the second most objectionable aspect to colonialism was the suggestion that economic resources were being extracted from the colony. The fact that the people in the colonised country might have to obey orders from the colonising power was seen as less important.

There were some more subtle aspects to this set of results, relating perhaps to the nature of teaching about recent history. For example in India there was a significant difference between the younger and older samples on the obedience and economic questions. In Northern Ireland, where contested histories of Britain and Ireland could add to confusion, there was evidence that the end of colonial empires had not been taught from a rights perspective. In Zimbabwe too a surprising 37.5% of the 14 year olds disagreed and disagreed strongly with the statement that colonialism is now thought to be wrong because it involves obeying another government's

orders. In a generation born after Zimbabwe's independence a large group had no conception of the element of oppression in colonial rule.

ii The samples were uncertain as to how far political independence can guarantee rights in practice. In Botswana 50.5% agreed or strongly agreed that independence guarantees citizens' rights, but 34.5% disagreed and strongly disagreed. In India, 51% said that one could not be sure that rights would be respected while 48.7% said that one could be. Rural students in India were more than 10% more optimistic than urban students that independence and democracy guarantee rights. In Northern Ireland the largest group were the "don't knows" (37.9%), and more disagreed (27.6%) than agreed, strongly or otherwise (24.3%). In Zimbabwe, 58.8% of the 14 year olds disagreed as did 68.1% of the 16 year olds.

iii Most students recognised that they had to vote, obey the laws and take an active interest in what goes on around them if everyone is to enjoy their rights today. This recognition of the need for an active citizenship counted on support ranging up from 73% (Botswana) to 85.3% (India); however significant minorities, approximately a fifth in Botswana and Zimbabwe, disagreed. The open-ended question, although some students did not respond, reinforced the majority view that citizens have to participate if rights are to be enjoyed. The most popular single suggestion in each country was: in Botswana, the need for democracy (16.5%); in India, obedience to the law and performing one's duties (34.3%); in Northern Ireland, the need for representation and the opportunity to vote (17.3%); and in Zimbabwe, the fight for good governance (26.6% of the younger sample and 15.9% of the older group).

In conclusion: Although the creation of a modern Commonwealth of sovereign states is within living memory, these results show some ignorance of colonialism and the background to independence in the younger generation. In Northern Ireland, there is lack of identification with an independent state which could easily compare with the experience of the three other samples and in Zimbabwe, where the process leading to recognised independence was different from most other Commonwealth members, there was some lack of understanding. However, many students appreciated that political independence does not necessarily guarantee rights. In India, where leaders at independence saw this as a prerequisite but not a guarantee of democracy and human rights, there was an encouraging difference beween the younger and older students. The older, class XI students showed a much clearer grasp, both of colonialism and the issues arising after independence.

d Civic and social rights and responsibilities

The introductory statement was, *Imagine you are a grown-up adult in your country. How important do you think it is for you and the well-being of your country that you and your friends should:* [Six questions follow, to be answered VERY

IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, DON'T KNOW, UNIMPORTANT, VERY UNIMPORTANT; the seventh question is open-ended.]

i Vote in elections?

ii Pay your taxes?

iii Know what your Government is doing?

iv Be free to join societies, political parties, trade unions, and to follow the religion of your choice?

v Support your Government and others when they try to provide homes for the homeless, better health care, more and better schools, jobs and food for the poor?

vi Act to support the homeless, health care, education , jobs and food even if the Government could not?

vii Is there anything else you could do to strengthen social rights and responsibilities as a citizen in your country?

The aim of this group of questions was to test basic citizenship commitments (the first three); the degree of backing for freedom of association, political freedom and religion (the fourth question); support for economic and social rights (the fifth question); and a sense of individual responsibility for economic and social rights (the sixth). This group of questions overtly matched the concept of rights with the concept of corresponding duties.

The key findings here were:

i The high importance attached to voting in elections and to knowing what the government does. In each country, with the exception of Botswana where 88% of the sample thought this was important and very important, over 90% of the sample agreed on the importance of voting. The highest response on voting was actually in India, where 82.6% thought it very important and 13.8% thought it important, totalling 96.4% in all. These figures were paralleled in the answers to knowing about the government's action. In Botswana 84% thought this important and very important; in India 95.1%, Northern Ireland 96.7% and Zimbabwe 93.1% of the samples said the same.

ii Support for taxes was rated lower than the importance of voting and knowing what the government does. In Botswana 68% thought this important and very important, but over 20% either did not know or thought it unimportant or very unimportant. In India, 94% thought it very important and important, with more urban and male students thinking it very important than did rural and female students, by margins of roughly 12-17%. In Northern Ireland 80.8% thought this important and very important, but this reaction was less true of the 14 year olds (76.8%) than of the 16 year olds

(84.9%). It was also less true of pupils from the "Catholic" schools (74.7%) than those from the "Protestant" schools (90.3%) although the older "Catholic" group were significantly more aware of the importance of taxes. In Zimbabwe 84.2% of the 14 year olds and 92.4% of the 16 year olds thought this important and very important.

iii Support for government welfare programmes to realise economic and social rights matched the commitment to voting and knowing what the government does, but significantly outran support for freedom of association and for voluntary action in social and welfare fields. Thus:

% IMPORTANT + VERY IMPORTANT

	Support government, v	*Act for welfare, vi*	*Free to associate, iv*
BOTSWANA	85	52	82
INDIA (14)	95	84.4	75
INDIA (16)	98.6	87.5	79.6
NORTHERN IRELAND	97.2	74.8	91.1
ZIMBABWE (14)	95.8	86.5	85.4
ZIMBABWE (16)	100	95.7	83.7

iv Students had real difficulty in imagining what else they could do to strengthen social rights and responsibilities. The final, open-ended question was not administered in Botswana; in India 16.3% failed to respond, 32% failed to respond in Northern Ireland and in Zimbabwe 41.2% of the 14 year olds and 69% of the 16 year olds either failed to answer or gave irrelevant replies. Of those answers which did come, 20.2% in India suggested work to help the poor and needy, and the same percentage mentioned helping to promote people's awareness about their rights and duties; 25.7% in Northern Ireland listed various measures relating to law enforcement, taxation and anti-discrimination; and in Zimbabwe there was support for promoting peace and harmony, and improved dialogue between the government and people.

In conclusion: These Commonwealth samples demonstrate both a high and an equal understanding and support for political rights (voting and knowledge of government action) and economic and social rights (homes, health, education, employment, food). Although these were broad-brush responses they tend to show that there is no perceived hierarchy or differentiation between these two sets of rights. While there was considerable support for voluntary action in the welfare field the responses implied that governments are seen as having the critical responsibility here. That the interrelationship of rights and responsibilities is not fully understood was illustrated by the rather lower support for taxation and the freedoms of association. It is obviously impossible for governments to realise economic and social rights without taxation, and meaningful voting requires a choice of political parties in an atmosphere of free association.

e Consumer [buyer] rights

The introductory statement was, *As a citizen of your country you use many products, read newspapers, and listen to radio or watch TV.* Then followed five questions, to be answered STRONGLY AGREE, AGREE, DON'T KNOW, DISAGREE or STRONGLY DISAGREE:

i Do you think that a consumer is entitled to get money back if a product is not what it claims, or cannot do what it says on the packaging?

ii Do you think advertising a product often involves exaggerating or lying about what it can do?

iii Do you think that radio and TV should give all sides of an event and not only report what Ministers and officials have to say about it?

iv Do you think it is always wrong/unfair if officials take bribes?

v Do you think that if a company or individual pollutes or damages their neighbour's land, property, animals, or the water they drink or the air they breathe, the company or individual should be prosecuted in court?

The aim of this group of questions was to see how far students might recognise that a citizen's rights are affected by misleading advertising or media reporting, by corruption among officials, or environmental pollution.

The key findings here were:

i With the exception of Northern Ireland, most of the samples thought it more important that environmental polluters should be prosecuted in court than that consumers should have a right to a refund if a product is not what it claims, or cannot do what it says on the packaging, thus:

% STRONGLY AGREE + AGREE

	Product refund, i	*Prosecute polluters, v*
BOTSWANA	58.5	68
INDIA (14)	75.7	85.7
INDIA (16)	77	93.4
NORTHERN IRELAND (14)	100	88.8*
NORTHERN IRELAND (16)	97.2	88.8*
ZIMBABWE (14)	79	93.7
ZIMBABWE (16)	83.7	87.9

* (The pollution question was not analysed by age in Northern Ireland)

ii Product refunds were seen as a more important issue than exaggeration or inaccuracy in the advertising of a product. Agreement or strong agreement to the statement about advertising ranged from 48% in Botswana, where the advertising industry is still relatively small, to 85% in Northern Ireland. In Zimbabwe there was a marked difference between the younger group, where 57.3% agreed that advertising often involves exaggeration or lying, and the older group, where 75% shared this opinion.

iii There was strong support for media impartiality in reporting, and reliance on all possible sources not just Ministerial and official ones. In Botswana there is no national TV, although South African TV is available, and radio reception is defective in remote areas. Even so, 67% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that broadcasters "should give all sides of an event", as did 90.7% in India and 91.1% in Northern Ireland. In Zimbabwe, as in India (where the difference was mostly in terms of strong agreement), the older group felt more strongly about this (in Zimbabwe there were 88% agreeing, among which 51.1% strongly agreed) than the younger 14 year olds (79.1% agreeing in Zimbabwe, among which 45.8% strongly agreed).

iv With the exception of Botswana, where only 58% of the sample agreed and strongly agreed that bribery is always wrong/unfair, the samples recorded overwhelming opposition to such corruption. In both India and Zimbabwe there was much stronger hostility to bribery among the older group of students. In India the strongly agree plus agree group was 76.9% at 14 and 91.4% at 16; in Zimbabwe 80.2% of 14 year olds and 93.4% of 16 year olds were agreeing and strongly agreeing. "Don't know" responses in Botswana, Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe may have reflected a lack of awareness of bribe-taking, particularly among the younger age groups.

In conclusion: The greater significance attached to redress against polluters, as against suppliers or manufacturers of products, suggests the strength of environmental awareness. The importance given to the need to get all sides of an event connects with the stress put on knowledge of government actions (see **d** above), and the degree to which students depend on the media for their knowledge of human rights (see **h** below). This section revealed strong inter-country differences. A striking aspect was the difference between the less rights-conscious response of the Botswana sample and the others, perhaps due to the relatively peaceful and homogeneous nature of Botswana society, where the national principles of *Kagisano* which are taught in school stress harmony and cooperation, and the risk of misbehaviour is less easy to imagine. The Northern Ireland response reflected some familiarity with the concept of consumer rights in products and services. In India and Zimbabwe the older samples were particularly hostile to officials taking bribes.

f Violence

The introductory statement was, *All countries suffer from fights and murders. Fights in the home can result in injuries. Violence is much worse where there is a war or civil war. Do you think:* [Eleven questions follow, to be answered STRONGLY AGREE, AGREE, DON'T KNOW, DISAGREE, STRONGLY DISAGREE; there follow two other questions to be answered YES/NO; the final question is open-ended.]

i Violence is never necessary, because it is always possible to settle an argument /issue peacefully?

ii People who use weapons or violence do so because they think they are stronger?

iii People who use weapons or violence do so because they know they could not persuade their opponents without using force?

iv Friends and neighbours should do something if they think a husband is beating his wife?

v Friends and neighbours should do something if they think a wife is beating her husband?

vi Friends and neighbours should do something if they think parents are injuring their child?

vii Police are right to use any necessary force to stop a crowd rioting, or to prevent property from being destroyed?

viii Children should not be bullied by other children?

ix Children should not be bullied by their teachers?

x Children should not be bullied by their parents?

xi Nearly all Commonwealth countries have adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.[8] Have you ever been told in school what these rights are?

xii Does violence of any kind worry you now?

xiii What do you think should be done to reduce violence?

The aim of this group of questions was to go beyond the concept that citizens have a right to a peaceful existence to explore why violence is used, domestic

[8] As at 1 January 1997 49 Commonwealth countries had ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

violence and bullying, the legitimacy of state violence, and knowledge of the UN convention whose article 19 is designed to protect children from violence.

The key findings here were:

i Most students in all samples were worried about violence, and most thought violence is never necessary because it is always possible to settle an argument peacefully. Percentages expressing worry were: Botswana 66.5%, India 72.4% , Northern Ireland 64.5% and Zimbabwe 78.1%. Percentages agreeing and strongly agreeing that violence is never necessary were: Botswana 70%, India 74.8%, Northern Ireland 61.7% and Zimbabwe 67.9%. It was striking that in Northern Ireland, the scene of conflict for over 25 years, average anxiety was lower than in the three other countries.

However there were significant within-country differences in these responses. In Northern Ireland there was a big difference between the views of younger and older students that "violence is never necessary", with 74% of the younger group agreeing and strongly agreeing, compared with only 49% of the older group. In India there was a smaller difference between the two age cohorts, but still with the younger group agreeing more. In one Northern Ireland school, a "Protestant" rural grammar school located in an area of conflict over marching traditions, over 43% disagreed or disagreed strongly that "violence is never necessary." In India more older than younger students were worried about violence now. In Northern Ireland there were marked gender and communal variations, with 44.4% of boys as against 9.5% of girls saying they were unworried by violence now. Whereas 59% of students in an all-boys "Protestant" school said they were not worried by violence none of the female students in an all-girl "Catholic" school were unworried.

ii More students think that people resort to force because they know they cannot persuade their opponents without it, than believe that people use weapons or violence because they think they are stronger. There were variations on this response. In Zimbabwe there were lower levels of agreement and strong agreement to the idea that "people who use weapons or violence do so because they think they are stronger"; it is possible that the Zimbabwe students felt that, in reality, those using weapons and violence thought they were really weaker, and these were a last resort. In Northern Ireland, the "Protestant" rural grammar school in an area of conflict produced the highest percentage disagreeing with the idea that people use violence because they could not persuade their opponents peacefully -- 41% --, nearly three times the average disgreement from the other four Northern Ireland schools.

iii There was a high level of agreement that domestic violence is morally wrong, irrespective of who the victim or perpetrator of the violence might be, and that external intervention by friends and neighbours is justified. Action to prevent wife-beating and child abuse had more support than action

to prevent the possibly rarer case of assaults on husbands. Intervention to prevent injury to a child had less support in India than elsewhere. Responses were thus:

% STRONGLY AGREE + AGREE TO INTERVENTION

	Child injury, vi	*Wife beaten, iv*	*Husband beaten, v*
BOTSWANA	78.5	79.5	69.5
INDIA (14)	65.6	78.8	64.4
INDIA (16)	71.7	86.8	72.4
NORTHERN IRELAND	93	88.8	82.7
ZIMBABWE (14)	90.6	81.3	78.1
ZIMBABWE (16)	83.7	89.1	82.6

iv The samples agreed that police are right to use "any necessary force" to stop a riot or the destruction of property. Strong agreement and agreement percentages were: Botswana 67%, India 81% (with more support among older and less among female students); Northern Ireland 64% (with major differences according to school type, age and gender; far more males than females agreed to police use of force; more of the older age group disagreed; "Protestant" students were more comfortable than "Catholic" ones, and the greatest disagreement came from an integrated school for both communities, where 38.1% disagreed and strongly disagreed); Zimbabwe 85.1%.

v Bullying is the type of violence of which young people may have most knowledge, and there was a consensus that it is unacceptable. In Botswana, 67.5% agreed and agreed strongly that bullying by anyone is wrong. In India, 82.4% agreed and strongly agreed. In Northern Ireland there was a slight downward gradient in responses, with the greatest disapproval of children bullying other children (96.3% concurrence), followed by disapproval of children being bullied by teachers (94.9%) and children being bullied by parents (89.3%); female pupils showed stronger disapproval of bullying than males in all cases. In Zimbabwe, 80.2% agreed and strongly agreed that bullying from any quarter was unacceptable, although 14.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

vi There is widespread ignorance of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by all four governments in the sample countries by the time of this inquiry[9] . In Botswana 43.5% knew about the convention, while 49.5% did not. In India 67.9% knew, but 30.8% did not. In Northern Ireland 93.5% did not know, and only 6% said they had heard about the convention in school[10] . In Zimbabwe only 53.2% of the younger group and 51.6% of the older group said they had been told about it in school.

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[9] Botswana ratified the convention in 1995, Britain in 1991, India in 1992 and Zimbabwe in 1990.

[10] The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its report on British implementation in 1995, recommended that children should be taught about their rights.

In conclusion: Violence as an infringement of rights is of the greatest concern. Domestic violence and bullying are strongly disapproved of. When asked an open-ended question about what could be done to reduce violence in society the students' proposals mirrored those in adult society -- a mixture of security and police measures on the one hand, with dialogue and non-violent negotiation on the other. The most remarkable finding is that a large number of youngsters have no knowledge of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, even though they may support some of its underlying concepts and are concerned about breaches. Article 42 of the convention says, "States Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions....widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike." Responses from Botswana and India reflected the strength of the family as an institution. In Northern Ireland, responses revealed significant communal and gender differences. In India and Zimbabwe, there was evidence of a progression in understanding between the two age groups.

g Identity

The introductory statement was, *Each of us is unique [special] and together we have rights under the constitution, by custom and practice, by law and international conventions [agreements].* Then:

i Put in order (1,2,3,4,5) which of these rights is most important to you . Give (1) to the most important and (5) to the least important:

The right to your name?

The right to your religion?

The right to go on living -- the right to life?

The right to your own language and culture?

Your parents' right to bring you up as they wish, within the laws of your country?

ii Choose the 5 most important words that describe who you are

The purpose of this brief section was to get a more individual response from students, recognising that in Article 8 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child the governments "undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity" and that identity issues form part of the maturation process of adolescence.

Key findings here were:

i That in three out of four countries the right to life was rated first, but thereafter there was considerable disagreement, thus:

	Life	*Own name*	*Religion*	*Culture*	*Parental*
BOTSWANA	4	1	5	2	3
INDIA (14)	1	4	5	3	2
INDIA (16)	1	4	5	3	2
N IRELAND (14)	1	2	3	5	4
N IRELAND (16)	1	3	2	4	5
ZIMBABWE (14)	1	5	3	2	4
ZIMBABWE (16)	1	4	5	3	2

There were significant differences within each country's sample; for example, within Northern Ireland the right to life was ranked higher by female and "Catholic" school students, while religion was ranked high by more pupils from the two "Protestant" schools. In India 23.4% of the sample did not understand the ranking system and their answers have been excluded; only 5.5% of students gave first rank to their right to religion. In Zimbabwe the age/school experience difference was marked, with older students rating parental rights as more important and the right to religion as less important then younger students.

ii There were major cultural differences in the way in which students described themselves. In Botswana, where only 52% had responded to the previous question and many found the questionnaire difficult, no information was collated here. In India, 40.7% described themselves as good citizens; other descriptors in descending order were the fact that they were students, their family, the fact that they were human beings, and their language or region. In Northern Ireland almost half the sample (49.5%) described themselves in terms of their personality, and 13.1% in terms of religion. In Zimbabwe there were significant differences between the younger and older groups, although both put first their bodily appearance and character (20.6% for the younger, 15.4% for the older). This was an expected adolescent response. After that the younger group stressed belief in their own religion (13.4% -- but only mentioned by 3.3% of the older group) and love for their family and relatives (10.3% -- and 8.7% for the older group). A significant description for the older teenagers was their own uniqueness (10.9%), which rated only 1% among the younger ones.

In conclusion: In all countries the students saw themselves in terms of broader rather than narrower identifications. Responses reflected cultural differences between the societies surveyed, with higher rankings for cultural and parental rights in Botswana and Zimbabwe, and a strong family identification in India as compared with the more individualistic society of Northern Ireland (where only 0.9% mentioned their family, friends and community in describing themselves). The strong emphasis on good citizenship in India may illustrate the sense of community in Indian society.

h Experience of human rights education at school

These questions were only put to the 16 year old, older sample. The introductory statement was, *As you know, you are taking part in an important study involving selected young people in four Commonwealth countries -- Botswana, India, Northern Ireland in Britain, and Zimbabwe. It aims to find out what you know about human rights and similar issues, and will assist schools in future.* There followed nine questions, and one open-ended one.

i Have you discussed or learnt about human rights, and the sort of questions you have just answered, in any of the following over the past two years? [Answers YES/NO]

In school?

In your family/home?

In talks with friends of your own age?

In listening to radio or watching TV?

In newspapers and magazines?

Anywhere else?

ii In which of these have you heard <u>most</u> about these questions?

iii Which of these sources has been <u>most helpful</u> to you?

iv At school, do you think that your teachers are working together to make sure all students understand human rights, and the responsibilities that go with them?

v Is there anything more you think schools can and should do to help young people to understand the rights and responsibilities of a citizen?

The aim of this group of questions was to see how the older students saw their schooling, as compared with other sources of information and ideas about human rights; whether they had any sense of a cross-curricular or whole-school commitment; and whether they had any suggestions as to what more schools could do.

The key findings here were:

i Except in Botswana,where fewer than half said they had heard about human rights over the previous two years, 80% and above in the other three samples had heard about human rights. However there was a difference between Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe on the one hand, where radio and

TV were seen as both the biggest and most helpful sources, and Botswana and India on the other, where schools gave most information and were most helpful. The three tables are thus:

% Hearing about human rights over the previous two years, by source

	School	*Family*	*Friends*	*Radio/TV*	*Press*	*Nowhere*
BOTSWANA	38.5	24	32	40.5	43	8.5
INDIA	88.8	71	82.2	86.8	71.1	
N IRELAND	29	49	38	80	77	9
ZIMBABWE	63.7	68.9	81.1	93.5	91.2	12.5

% Stating where they had heard most about rights over previous two years

	School	*Family*	*Friends*	*Radio/TV*	*Press*	*No answer*
BOTSWANA	24.5	3	5	9.5	2.5	55.5
INDIA	45.4	7.9	7.9	25.7	6.6	6.3
N IRELAND	10.4	12.3	2.8	47.2	12.3	15
ZIMBABWE	22.7	8.7	5.4	42	20.5	4.3

% Stating which source was most helpful over the previous two years

	School	*Family*	*Friends*	*Radio/TV*	*Press*	*No answer*
BOTSWANA	16	7	6	12	11.5	54.3
INDIA	31.6	9.2	15.1	30.3	9.2	4.6
N IRELAND	11.3	10.4	8.5	36.8	14.2	18.8
ZIMBABWE	15.2	13	14.1	34.8	20.7	2.2

In terms of hearing about human rights over the previous two years the high response from India is noteworthy and the very high scores from Zimbabwe may reflect the focus on human rights which followed the Commonwealth Heads' meeting in 1991, with its widely-known Harare Declaration. In terms of where most was heard it is worth pointing out again that in Botswana there is no national TV, radio reception can be defective in remote areas and newspaper readership is low. In the question on helpfulness, school was seen as third in importance in Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe; in India radio and TV were rated as almost as helpful as school, perhaps because the media deal with more current events and issues, perhaps more interestingly

ii Whereas most students in India thought their teachers were working together (67.1% to 30.9%), most in Northern Ireland, where Education for Mutual Understanding is intended to be a cross-curricular commitment, did not (by 71.7% to 21.7%). In Zimbabwe there was an even split -- 50.6%

thought their teachers were working together to make sure students understood rights and responsibilities,while 49.4% did not. Responses to this question were not collated in Botswana.

iii Students in all countries thought that schools could do more. In Botswana 23% said here should be more teaching of human rights in school; in India, where 73.3% wanted to see more done the practical suggestions were that schools should respect rights and duties in practice, and learning should not be restricted to textbooks; in Northern Ireland 34% wanted human rights classes; in Zimbabwe 78.7% wanted the school curriculum to include human rights.

In conclusion: There is a marked contrast in the findings from Botswana and India on the one hand, where school is seen as the most valuable source both quantitatively and qualitatively, and Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe on the other, where schools are not seen as the key information source, but the media are. In Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe also, the teachers are not seen as working closely together, which suggests that initial and in-service education of teachers are of crucial importance. When it comes to their suggestions for improvement, students give an overwhelming significance to the role of schools. School ethos and administrative practices are highlighted. The importance of the broadcasting media everywhere, in introducing issues of human rights to young citizens, is underlined.

7 Conclusions and recommendations reached by each country team

Each country team participating in the Commonwealth Values project drew up its own list of findings and recommendations. These were:

Botswana

i Discussion

Results indicate a fair understanding of the seven concepts of human rights under focus. In Law and the Administration of Justice, 140 out of the 200 respondents could not describe possible incidents of stealing in their area. Language could have posed a problem here but, considering that respondents had been advised to ask for the researcher's help whenever they could not comprehend a question, and that they were to use their local language whenever that would make them feel more comfortable, the researcher is inclined to conclude that respondents have had very few experiences of theft in their neighbourhood.

The students' grasp of Equality of Opportunity was more articulate than that of Law and Administration of Justice, the consensus here being that fairness should prevail over any form of discrimination.

On Civic and Social Rights the general emphasis was on democracy, peace, harmony and individual freedoms. It is important to note that civic and political rights are taught in school and that these concepts are derived from Botswana's National Principles, which is one of the topics. On the other hand this emphasis could be attributed to Botswana's comparatively long-standing stable environment (political, social and economic) which is promoting democracy. Questionnaire responses on violence -- and the open-ended question where 89% of respondents had nothing to say -- confirm this notion of peace and harmony.

Answers to questions about school experience indicate that schools are not providing adequate materials, and that human rights are not taught as a subject. Other sources, like broadcasting, magazines, friends and family have been cited as informative as well. The latter sources, however, have socio-economic implications and may not be regarded as reliable sources for what, according to all respondents, is a very important subject.

Seeing that school increases awareness of human rights, the next logical step to take would be to address the needs expressed by both administrators and students for human rights education to be developed and broadened in scope to include all essential concepts. It would also appear, from the respondents' views, that it would be desirable to start education for human rights as early as possible in the school system. School as a socialising institution would then develop the knowledge, values and attitudes applicable to a "resounding human rights society."

ii Summary

In launching the Botswana Centre for Human Rights (Ditshwanelo) the government has put in place a mechanism for uplifting human rights. NGOs are facilitating this by educating youth and the nation at large. Despite all these efforts this study shows that the knowledge of students (in Form 1 and Form 2) is very inadequate. Students have some measure of awareness of some concepts of human rights but full knowledge of very few -- those directly taught in class, such as civil and political rights. The school was identified as the most significant source for students. But the part of the study which related to Ministry of Education policy, instructional materials and teacher education showed that not enough ground was being covered. The conclusion must be that human rights education has to be strengthened within the formal education system.

iii Recommendations

1 A policy should be established to introduce human rights as such in the curriculum.

2 The Curriculum Development Division within the Ministry of Education should press for a full-time curriculum officer for human rights.

3 Human rights should be taught across the curriculum, starting as early as the primary level.

4 Human rights topics must be examinable.

5 Language teaching methods must be improved to raise students' proficiency.

6 Appropriate and adequate instructional materials must be designed for human rights modules.

7 Teachers must be trained in the content and appropriate methodologies for human rights both in pre-service and in-service courses.

8 Commonwealth countries should cooperate to promote the teaching of human rights. The strategies could include the development of instructional materials, programme exchanges, seminars and students' regional debates.

India

Recommendations

1 More such studies, covering different dimensions of human rights, should be conducted. These studies should be conducted periodically at both all-India and regional/local levels, covering various types of school and student populations. There is also a need for conducting such studies for other (non-student) population groups.

2 Experimental projects/studies should be taken up to develop materials, teaching-learning methodologies and school practices for improving the effectiveness of human rights education.

3 The approach for introducing human rights in the school curriculum should remain basically cross-curricular. The deficiencies in the existing curriculum, some of which are possible to identify on the basis of this study and others, should be kept in view when the national and State level organisations responsible for curriculum undertake curriculum revision. Serious efforts need to be made to change and transform the pedagogical practices in the teaching/learning of human rights, as of other areas. There should be more emphasis on interaction, discussion and debate, and activities and projects, inside and outside the clasroom, in the school and in the community. Schools should make use of expertise available in human rights organisations and NGOs working in this area.

There is also a need to improve the ambience and organisation of schools. One of the findings of this study which has been highlighted is that, while the awareness of human rights on most issues is quite high, the corresponding willingness to act or participate with enthusiasm is lacking.

This issue deserves particular attention when activities and programmes are considered for the strengthening of human rights education, including curriculum revision and the improvement of classroom practices.

4 The national and State-level educational bodies and organisations should produce a variety of materials -- print, audio, video -- relating to human rights and disseminate them so that they are within easy access of all schools. These materials should cover human rights ideas and concepts as well as issues and concerns, and teaching-learning strategies to facilitate their translation into teaching-learning practices.

5 While human rights education should become integral to all in-service training programmes for teachers, there is an urgent need to ensure its integration in the pre-service training curriculum. Teachers' organisations should also be involved in human rights education programmes.

6 It is necessary to evolve the necessary mechanisms of coordination between the national and State-level educational authorities and institutions for the effective implementation of activities and programmes for strengthening human rights education.

7 The Commonwealth can play an important role in promoting exchange of human rights education materials developed in various countries, sponsoring researches and studies in the area of human rights education, facilitating interactions between curriculum experts of Commonwealth countries on issues relating to human rights education, and promoting student and teacher exchange programmes and interactions between teachers' organisations.

Northern Ireland

Recommendations

1 Policy

The United Kingdom has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child which was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1989 and came into force on 2 September 1990. Article 42 of the convention is a commitment to make its principles and provisions widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike. Next year is also the 50th anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights which seems an appropriate time to review how national commitments to these human rights instruments are reflected in education policies and practice in Northern Ireland. Such a review may also provide the Department of Education for Northern Ireland with an opportunity to state its commitment to human rights principles.

2 Curriculum

The potential for human rights education can be seen from the curriculum audit. Human rights issues feature across many subjects; however it is evident, from the results of this study, that there is no coherent, integrated understanding of human rights concepts. A number of options exist for strengthening the commitment to human rights concepts through the curriculum and these should be considered as part of the next review of the Northern Ireland curriculum. Options include:

* more specific reference to human rights principles across all programmes of study
* strengthening the human rights dimension of specific subjects
* linking the objectives of cross-curricular themes more clearly to human rights concepts
* exploring the development of a Personal and Social Education programme (PSE) based on human rights concepts
* development of specific modules on human rights and responsibilities

Consideration should be given to the development of progression in pupils' understanding of human rights concepts as they move through the various stages of schooling.

Decisions need to be made about the most appropriate way of assessing pupils' learning and progress in understanding principles related to human rights.

It is important that practitioners are involved in a consultation process regarding any proposals for change, and their views are taken into account.

Particular steps should be taken to raise awareness amongst teachers and pupils of children's rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990.

3 Resources

Although a variety of resources exist to support human rights education, the findings from this study suggest that these could be better coordinated and that teachers would benefit from better support in adapting human rights resources to curriculum needs.

The media, particularly radio and television, have a significant influence as sources of information for young people and this should be recognised when developing resources for human rights education. Support for more coordinated involvement of NGOs in human rights education should be provided.

4 Training and professional development

Many teachers acknowledge their lack of technical knowledge in relation to the provisions in parti ar human rights instruments and human rights concepts in general. Steps sho ld be taken to increase knowledge and awareness in these areas as a basic entitlement in initial and in-service education and training of teachers.

The importance of developing a school environment which is consistent with human rights principles suggests that it will be important to develop specific in-service programmes in this area for senior managers in schools, and for whole-school staff development.

Zimbabwe

Main findings and recommendations

It would appear that, although there were some differences between the two groups of students, it is unlikely that these could be attributed to their experience of school given the responses of the older group to questions about the sources of their knowledge, as well as the marginal (at the most) differences in scores on the majority of the items. On the basis of this observation, and the follow-up interviews with the students, teachers and administrators, the team came up with the following recommendations:

* National policy needs to be articulated so that the place of human rights education within the national curriculum can be clarified. The policy should also be reflected in policies and practices at school level. It should be all-embracing to include teacher development. It was noted that the lack of policy seems to be the major problem militating against the delivery of a human rights curriculum, and this affects the support and resources allocated to human rights education and related issues.

* A human rights curriculum should cover all levels, from pre-primary right through secondary to tertiary levels. In designing such a curriculum, strategies need to be devised to address the mismatch between ideals and reality. Cases in point noted in the course of the study included issues of bribery, appointment to jobs, and the exercise of extra-judicial powers by the public and police. Students expressed the need to see human rights reflected both in school practices and "real life." The involvement of stakeholders was deemed essential in the development and delivery of a human rights curriculum. Professional associations of teachers were seen as major stakeholders.

* That, for a start, Education for Living could be reviewed and strengthened while the nation awaits the outcome of the Education Review Committee which is expected to come up with wide-ranging recommendations on curriculum as well as other changes in education; Education for Living was

seen as the single subject which best covered human rights concepts as defined in this project.

* That other subjects should also be taught with a human rights orientation; consequently an in-service programme for all teachers and their supervisors should be mounted.

* The role of examinations/evaluation/assessment in monitoring the impact of human rights education needs to be considered; equally important is the need to monitor the performance of learners. Students, teachers and administrators emphasised the need to ensure that the subject is "properly taught" and "taken seriously" -- hence the importance of monitoring and assessment.

* The role that the media and peers can play in the development and delivery of a human rights curriculum should be taken into account.

* The Commonwealth and international organisations, it seems from the study, would be expected to play a supportive and facilitatory role.

8 Commonwealth cooperation and the 13th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, Gaborone, Botswana, 28 July - 1 August 1997

The project was conceived from the start as a Commonwealth exercise and supported on that basis by the Department for International Development in Britain, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Department for Education, Northern Ireland. National teams, particularly in their follow-up interviews with teachers, advisers and administrators, were asked to seek opinions on the scope for Commonwealth cooperation in future.

Furthermore, as part of a stimulus for Commonwealth networking in the area of human rights, the project supported an important conference for teachers held at Stoke Rochford, England in May 1996 under the auspices of the National Union of Teachers of England and Wales, the South African Democratic Teachers Union and the All-India Federation of Teachers Organisations. This was attended by teacher union representatives from 27 countries and produced a significant declaration[11] .

The Commonwealth Values project team subsequently submitted a series of recommendations to the 13th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers based on the research findings reported here, and in the context of national commitments to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948,

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[11] The Stoke Rochford Declaration, created by a series of working commissions, is available from the National Union of Teachers at Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BD, England, or from SADTU or the AIFTO. It covered education as a human right; the rights of the child; the rights of the girl child; teachers' rights; development rights; the right to a safe and healthy environment; sexual orientation; and education for mutual understanding.

the concluding declaration at the UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, 1993, the Harare Commonwealth Declaration, 1991, and the specific international and regional human rights instruments to which Commonwealth states are party. These recommendations were as follows:

1 Policy

* Commonwealth countries need to review how they are carrying forward their human rights commitments at national level, and in terms of internal educational policies and their implementation. They may need to appoint national officers in the Ministry of Education or to strengthen national curriculum agencies. National commitments and policies should be reflected at the school level.

* It would be fitting to launch this review in 1998, in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. The opportunity should be taken to raise the status of human rights education.

2 Curriculum

* Commonwealth countries need to define precisely where in the curriculum their human rights commitments are being reflected in the teaching and learning of students. They should consider which educational strategies are most suitable to their own national circumstances.

* Ministers of Education and curriculum agencies should consider how human rights and associated concepts may be introduced at primary level, how this may impinge on the secondary curriculum, and how children's understanding develops as they grow up.

* Schools must endeavour to provide an environment which respects human rights norms, and which stresses the mutual responsibility of young citizens.

* Priority should be given to making students aware of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

* Ministries will need to undertake periodic impact studies, and should carefully consider an assessment of student progress which is appropriate to their national circumstances.

3 Resources

* Appropriate and adequate instructional materials must be identified, designed and, where they exist, coordinated and made accessible for schools.

* The significant role and critical understanding of the media should be taken into account when devising strategies to strengthen human rights education in schools. There are positive opportunities for utilising radio and TV to promote young people's understanding.

* Teachers' organisations have a creative role to play, through training and informing their members.

* Schools should be encouraged to use the expertise of NGOs where appropriate.

* National human rights institutions should be regarded as a resource for schools where they exist, and schools will benefit from their services for public and non-formal education.

* The role of peer groups could be a resource rather than a handicap to a strengthened understanding of human rights by young people at school and in the community.

4 Teacher education

* Teachers must be educated in the content and methodologies appropriate to human rights. There should be provision which supports human rights education at pre-service, in-service, professional development and senior management levels.

* All teachers should be exposed to human rights concepts, because every curriculum area has a human rights dimension.

* Teachers should be encouraged to work together in school on human rights, to increase their effectiveness with their students. Where a cross-curricular approach is adopted, particular care should be taken that teachers are suitably prepared.

5 Commonwealth cooperation

* The possibility of a human rights education agency which could serve the Commonwealth as a whole should be investigated.

* Commonwealth Ministers of Education should encourage member states to utilise and/or replicate findings of the Commonwealth Values project, and should welcome appropriate proposals for follow-up.

* The Commonwealth of Learning should contribute to the solution of needs expressed, particularly through the offer of distance learning packages for serving teachers.

* The Commonwealth Secretariat's work in developing a strategy for the promotion of human rights teaching, by cooperation between the Human Rights Unit and Education Programme, should be warmly endorsed. It should now focus on:

-- Development and exchange of instructional materials

-- Programme exchanges and the attachment of experts

-- Regional meetings of curriculum and examination agencies, concerned with transferring national commitments into curricular policy

-- Assisting Ministries, teacher bodies and schools to arrange student debates in Commonwealth regions

* The National Union of Teachers, the All-India Federation of Teachers Organisations and the South African Democratic Teachers Union should follow up their cooperation with other teacher bodies in the Commonwealth, to strengthen teacher networking and support

The Commonwealth Ministers of Education chose to discuss the work of the project, presented in a special report, at an expert Round Table at the Gaborone conference which was chaired by the Hon Gabriel Michinga, Minister of Education for Zimbabwe. This was lively and well-attended by a number of Ministers (including Professor S M Bengu of South Africa) and four of the researchers from three of the four participating countries.

In a rich discussion it is only possible to pick a few points, but the Indian delegation urged the need for work in primary schools and for better teacher education; the-Ghanaian delegate said that a human rights emphasis should tend to strengthen rather than weaken school discipline; Professor Bengu said that the new South African democracy wanted to stress that the new constitution and human rights guarantees were a lived experience in schools; Professor Malcolm Skilbeck, a resource person for the conference, noted that there were no North/South differences emerging from the study; he thought it was important to develop strategies, but did not favour a new pan-Commonwealth agency.

Mr Justin Ellis of Namibia welcomed the problem-posing nature of the study, commended the idea of using the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration as an opportunity for strengthening human rights education, saw a role for the Commonwealth of Learning, and pointed out the need for human rights work in African societies undergoing rapid cultural change. A Scottish member of the British delegation said she felt the report was salutary for Britain, welcomed the stress on teachers and teacher education, and remarked that she was not confident that Scottish youngsters would say that they had heard of the Rights of the Child. There was indeed applause for two observers present from teacher organisations -- Mr Steve Sinnott of the National Union of Teachers and Mr Ramesh Joshi of the All-India Federation of Teachers Organisations -- when they argued for improved consultation with their profession.

In the communiqué at the end of the conference the Ministers of Education stated (paragraph 45), "Ministers considered a report on 'Commonwealth Values in Education: Young People's Understanding of Human Rights', and recommended that all countries review the teaching about human rights in

their schools as part of their celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They suggested that the Secretariat or another agency could be asked to collate the results and report to the next Ministers' Conference, and encourage the implementation of human rights education in Commonwealth countries."

The result of the project and the Ministerial conference is to suggest a host of continuing possibilities for cooperation, some initially pegged to the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration. There is scope for international and regional meetings on curricula and teacher education; for continuing research into methodologies, and perhaps longitudinal work starting in the primary school; for work in devising new materials, some using Internet technology. The key requirements are a suitable consensus among groups of Commonwealth players, and the resources and personnel to do a worthwhile job.

It is anticipated that a number of partners in the original Commonwealth Values project will be considering how to build on what has been achieved, particularly in the context of the Ministerial commitment to make use of the jubilee of the Universal Declaration in 1998.

9 Summary of findings of the study

The project aimed to see:

a* how national commitments to human rights instruments are reflected in the school curriculum

b* whether young people are acquiring basic concepts in seven selected dimensions of human rights -- law and the administration of justice; equality of oportunity; history; civic and social rights and responsibilities; consumer rights; violence; and identity. (Older students were also asked about their experience of human rights education in school.)

c* what difference approximately two years of study makes to the understanding of young people

d* whether there are any significant variations between countries, by gender, or between different types of school within the same country (for different school types were selected to provide contrasts in each)

e* what are the key priorities identified in the four country samples for strengthening this area of the curriculum

f* what scope there may be for Commonwealth cooperation in future

This was a three year study into the teaching and learning of human rights at the secondary school (and in India, also at upper primary school) level. It

involved 473 male and 442 female students, a total of 915, mostly aged around 14 and 16 in 23 schools in Botswana, India, Northern Ireland (Britain) and Zimbabwe. The study included an hour-long questionnaire completed by students, an in-depth interview with students, teachers and administrators, an audit of the curriculum, and a review of the materials and teacher education available.

Because of the smallness of the overall sample the results should be regarded as suggestive and indicative rather than definitive, even for the four countries which participated in the project. They may, however, be regarded as thought-provoking in many countries, especially in the context of Commonwealth efforts to consolidate the human rights and responsibilities of young citizens, in the wake of the Harare Commonwealth Declaration, 1991. The project is a Commonwealth contribution to the UN Decade of Human Rights Education.

The findings were:

a* National commitments to human rights as reflected in the school curriculum

Only in one of the systems surveyed (in India) was there a reasonably exact reflection of the national commitment to international human rights instruments, although students in two others were taught the national constitution. For example in Northern Ireland 93.5% of the secondary school sample said they had not been explicitly told what are the Rights of the Child, as set out in the UN Convention to which the United Kingdom is a party. Only just over half the Zimbabwe sample knew of the same UN Convention. In India, by contrast, 67.9% said they had been told about it. Although the situation varied between countries, in general it did not seem as though curriculum authorities had recently defined how and where the understanding of human rights and responsibilities should be fostered, and these findings are therefore being fed into reviews which are now in hand. In one country the key carrier subject was recognised as having low status, and no examination had ever been set for it. Special problems for the overall level of understanding arose where a cross-curricular commitment to human rights was not strong, or where relevant subjects were not compulsory.

b* Acquiring basic concepts

In the area of law and the administration of justice, where students were asked to imagine what might happen if a thief was caught, there was widespread understanding of due process. However in Northern Ireland the majority did not understand that justice must be seen to be done in public, half of Indian students assumed there would be unlawful action by police, and there were significant minorities in Botswana and Zimbabwe which assumed there would be an element of bribery and that extra-judicial measures would be taken against culprits. It was noteworthy that many

students were able to distinguish between what ought to happen and the sometimes unlawful acts of law enforcement agencies.

On equality of opportunity , where students commented on a hypothetical interview for a job, they were also able to distinguish between what they thought ought to happen and what they thought would happen. The majority thought the best interviewee and best qualified should get the job. But in Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe the majority thought the person most like the appointing group would get thejob. In India, where equality of opportunity in public employment is a Fundamental Right, the answers showed a solid understanding of this principle.

In history, where the questions related to an understanding of colonialism, there was some ignorance of its nature and its impact on human rights. In Zimbabwe, for example, 37.5% of the 14 year olds disagreed or disagreed strongly with the statement that colonialism is now thought to be wrong "because the people in the colonised country have to obey orders from the government of another country." It would appear that a weakness in the teaching of modern national and world history, which is not always compulsory, may explain the ignorance of colonialism and the significance of political independence. However, most students in three of the four countries appreciated that political independence alone does not guarantee human rights, and only in Botswana did a majority share that belief.

For civic and social rights and responsibilities there was a high degree of similarity across the four countries. The samples thought it important and very important to vote in elections, to know what the government was doing, and to support the government and others when they try to provide homes for the homeless, better health care, more and better schools, jobs and food for the poor. These things were generally rated more highly than the need to pay taxes, the freedom to join societies, political parties, trade unions, and to follow your own religion, and to act or do something yourself to support the homeless, healthcare, education, jobs and food even if the government cannot. The idea that economic and social rights are less well understood or less strongly supported than civil and political rights is not justified in this Commonwealth sample.

With consumer rights there was a fairly high degree of awareness in India, Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe, but a much less rights-conscious response by the Botswana sample, even to a question about environmental pollution. It would appear that the explanation may lie not only in the fact that consumer rights are not covered in the Botswana curriculum, but because Botswana society is relatively peaceful and homogeneous.

On violence, students in the sample schools were generally worried, and strongly disapproving of bullying and domestic violence. Their proposals for reducing violence -- a mixture of security and police measures on the one

hand, with dialogue and non-violent negotiation on the other -- mirror those obtaining in adult societies.

For identity, there were marked differences in the significance attached to different rights; although samples in three out of four countries put the right to life first, the Indian samples and the older Zimbabwe sample put "your parents' right to bring you up as they wish" second, which was third in Botswana and fourth in Northern Ireland and among the younger Zimbabwe group. Students saw themselves in terms of broader rather than narrower identifications, and there was a strong family identification in India compared with the more individualistic society of Northern Ireland.

c* The difference made by two years of schooling, between around 14 and 16, at the secondary level

Although comparisons were only consistently reported for India and Zimbabwe it would appear that, in general, the older students showed more sophisticated attitudes. But these may not have been the product of educational progression in school, as compared with personal maturation, or the influence of media, peer groups and others. For example, in India 91.4% of 16 year olds but only 76.9% of 14 year olds strongly agreed and agreed that it is always wrong or unfair if officials take bribes. In Zimbabwe a significantly greater number of older rather than younger students thought that radio and TV should give all sides of an event and not only report what Ministers and officials have to say about it. In Northern Ireland, however, where 74% of the younger sample agreed and strongly agreed that "violence is never necessary, because it is always possible to settle an argument peacefully", only 49% of the older ones did so.

A major reason for caution in attributing the change of attitudes to the effect of schooling was that many more students in Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe said that they had heard most about human rights from radio and TV over the two previous years, and that this was more helpful than what they had heard in school. Although the Indian and Botswana samples rated school as the most significant, radio and TV were close runners-up for helpfulness in these countries also.

d* Significant variations

Inevitably, given the heterogeneous nature of the sample, there were significant variations between countries and within countries. One purpose of the inquiry was to see how far there could be a commonality of learning, given the variety of curricula as well as resources available to schools. In general the responses from the Indian sample showed the greatest appreciation of the issues involved; these did not vary greatly across the diverse pilot schools and showed a growth in understanding over the two years; virtually all issues were covered somewhere in the Indian curriculum, and there is a strong rights component in the Indian constitution itself (

which emphasises Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles and Fundamental Duties). By contrast, the weakest response came from the Botswana sample, for which there appear to be two main reasons: the outgoing syllabus (now being replaced) which these students had followed gave little attention to human rights; further, language difficulties in English may have handicapped the more rural students in particular.

Gender differences, and in Northern Ireland religious and communal differences, were significant in some survey answers. For example, in Northern Ireland, the expectation that an alleged thief would have a lawyer in court was significantly higher (94.7%) in a "Catholic", all-girls, urban secondary school as compared with a "Protestant", all-boys urban secondary school (71.8%). Both in Northern Ireland and India, males were more likely than females to agree that "police are right to use any necessary force to stop a crowd rioting, or to prevent property from being destroyed." Interviews with administrators and teachers suggest that in Botswana and Zimbabwe the rural schools may be disadvantaged for resources and other reasons in human rights education, as in other curricular areas.

e* Key priorities for improvement

Emerging from the project as a whole -- student survey, student, teacher and administrator interviews, curriculum and materials audit -- are a series of priorities which seem to apply to all four countries and are likely to apply elsewhere in the Commonwealth:

-- a need to locate precisely where the human rights commitments are situated in the curriculum, and to strengthen further their curricular effectiveness

-- a need to assess student progress, if not by examination then by other types of inspection, assessment or impact study

-- a need to strengthen teacher education, both pre-service and in-service, so that all teachers have some knowledge of the content of human rights education and are aware of the implications for their own work

-- a need to strengthen resources, not only with materials, but by imaginative use of teacher networking, teacher asociations and NGOs, and national human rights institutions where they exist

-- a need to take advantage of the special opportunity in 1998 of the 50th anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights to review progress

f* Commonwealth cooperation in future

The Commonwealth, often regarded as an international civil society and taking a salient position for human rights since the Harare Declaration, 1991,

is well-placed to give continuing leadership. The study found widespread support for growing Commonwealth cooperation, even though differences of curriculum and resources will persist. It is hoped that Commonwealth Ministers of Education and Commonwealth Heads of Government wil continue to endorse the importance of human rights education for member countries. Specific cooperation could lie:

-- in a joint call to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the UN Declaration by reviewing the place of human rights commitments in the school curriculum

-- in investigating the feasibility of a human rights education agency which could serve the Commonwealth as a whole, especially for materials and curricular support

-- in seeking appropriate action by the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth of Learning and other Commonwealth bodies and governments, especially in exchanges of programmes, materials and experts

-- in encouraging other Commonwealth governments to replicate the present study in their schools

-- in developing concepts of human rights and associated responsibilities at all stages of school education, including the primary stage

-- in cooperating to promote pre-service and in-service education for teachers.

Acknowledgements

The research arrangements in each country reflected its own resources for educational research. In each case the collaborators gave generously of their time and enthusiasm, and the institutions to which they belong made invaluable contributions in finance and logisics. The project as a whole was financed by the Department for International Development, the Commonwealth Secretariat (Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation), and the Department of Education, Northern Ireland. All those concerned are grateful to these bodies for their funding.

We should also like to thank the 23 secondary schools in four countries who helped, their students who completed questionnaires, their staff and principals who participated in interviews, and other educational advisers and administrators who provided the raw material for this study.

In Botswana the project was undertaken by Mrs Naledi T Ratsoma in the Curriculum Development and Evaluation Department of the Ministry of Education. In India it was carried out by Professor Arjun Dev, Head of the Department of Education in Social Sciences and Humanities in the National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi. In Northern

Ireland the Department of Education and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment nominated Dr Alan Smith, of the School of Education of the University of Ulster, to do this work; he was assisted by Ms Ursula Birthistle. In Zimbabwe the project was overseen by Ms Melania Rukanda, Chief Education Officer, Standards Control and Professional Administration in the Ministry of Education. Without their hard work, and the assistance of their colleagues, pilot schools and teachers, this report could not have been prepared.

The three year project was coordinated by Richard Bourne and Dr Jagdish Gundara at the International Centre for Intercultural Studies, London University Institute of Education. All stakeholders in the project served on an international project committee which met in London in 1995, in Northern Ireland in 1996, and in Gaborone in 1997. They were able to provide important mutual support, as for example when the University of Ulster assisted in computing the results from Botswana.

Thanks in London are also owed to Terry Allsop and Graham Larkbey, respectively chair and secretary of the Education Research Board of the Department for International Development (formerly Overseas Development Administration); to Mrs Christine Mulindwa-Matovu and Ms Madhuri Bose in the Human Rights Unit in the Commonwealth Secretariat, which has assisted the Commonwealth Values project since its earliest stage in 1993, and to Professor Stephen Matlin and his education colleagues Dr Jasbir Singh and Ms Selina Mohsin in the Human Resource Development Division. Steady interest and support of a different kind has been offered by Steve Sinnott, deputy general secretary of the National Union of Teachers.

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The London University Institute of Education set up an academic advisory committee for the project chaired by Professor Gunther Kress, with Dr Bob Cowen, Dr Eva Gamarnikow, Dr Crispin Jones and Dr Phillida Salmon. They, and the long-suffering Secretary to the International Centre for Intercultural Studies, Alice Henfield, are thanked as well.

In Botswana the project was supported by the Curriculum Development Division but an exceptional amount of work and travel fell to the key researcher, Naledi Ratsoma. She was assisted by Mrs Nonofo Losike-Sedimo in the computer analysis of data, and by colleagues at the University of Ulster, Northern Ireland, who were able to support them with suitable software.

In India the study was carried out by a team comprising: Dr Dinesh Shama, Professor (Ms) Indira Arjun Dev, Mr Nasiruddin Khan, Dr J L Pandey, Ms Supta Das, Dr Ved Prakash, Professor Arjun Dev (all from the NCERT), Professor D Lahiry (formerly with the NCERT), Ms Raj Varma and Ms Sunaina Sharma (Investigators). Dr (Ms) Karuna Chanana of Jawaharlal Nehru University advised the team on several aspects of the study. The heads of various national bodies, such as the National Council of Teacher

Education, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti and the National Council of Educational Research and Training made themselves available for detailed discussions with team members on various issues of human rights education. Professor Arjun Dev, as National Coordinator, was grateful to his colleagues Shri Harish Threja and Shri Motilal for their secretarial assistance.

In Northern Ireland the support of the Department of Education was invaluable, and special mention should be made of the interest in the project shown by Ms Carmel Gallagher of the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment.

In Zimbabwe the National Coordinator, Ms Melania Rukanda, worked on the project with officers from the Curriculum Development Unit and with the Research/Evaluation officer from the Ministry of Education Planning Unit.

International research projects require cooperation, stamina and good humour, especially when they aim for comparable quality and are working to tight budgets and deadlines. In this case, more persons than can be named deserve our thanks, but without those listed here the project could certainly not have been completed.

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ISBN: 1 86192 095 4